RUDOLF EUCKEN
HIS PHILOSOPHY & INFLUENCE

MEYRICK BOOTH

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RUDOLF EUCKEN:
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WORKS BY RUDOLF EUCKEN

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE. As Viewed by the Great Thinkers from Plato to the Present Time. Translated by Professor Boyce Gibson and Professor Hough. Demy 8vo.

MAIN CURRENTS OF MODERN THOUGHT. Translated by Meyrick Booth. Demy 8vo.

RUDOLF EUCKEN:

HIS PHILOSOPHY AND INFLUENCE

BY

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PREFACE

THIS little book is an attempt to provide a popular account of a philosophy which is playing a leading part in shaping the thought and life of the modern world. It has been my endeavour to avoid technical philosophical language, and to treat the subject throughout in such a fashion as to appeal to those who have made no special study of philosophy or theology.

Professor Eucken has no dearer wish than that philosophy should cease to be a mere academic speciality and become a power in the life of the people ; and he seeks, in particular, to interest all those men and women who are growing tired of mere negation and agnosticism. I feel, therefore, that my imperfect attempt to interpret his comprehensive work of construction perhaps needs no apology. For Eucken has done much—more perhaps than any other living man—to render possible to modern people a belief in the reality and supremacy of the spiritual world. And what he finally seeks is nothing less than the reconstruction of our entire life and civilisation upon a positive spiritual basis.

As one who attended Professor Eucken's

lectures for more than two years, it gives me peculiar pleasure to assist in the task of spreading his convictions throughout the English-speaking world, in which his teaching has already met with such a favourable reception.

The early portion of this study (Chapters I. to V.) is concerned with an explanation of the main principles of Eucken's thought. The latter section (Chapters VI. to XII.) seeks to bring his philosophy into contact with some of the central problems of modern life and thought. In the second part the treatment is necessarily, to some extent, independent ; but I have kept closely to the lines laid down in Eucken's works.

The reader will see that four of the longest chapters have been devoted to the *social side* of Eucken's philosophy (including one on Education). In assigning so much space to this topic the present work has, I hope, done something to justify its existence ; for this most important aspect of his philosophy has been singularly neglected in this country.

Eucken's theological views are already well known to English readers ; and this must be my excuse for having left only one chapter for their discussion.

MEYRICK BOOTH.

LETCHWORTH,
August, 1913.

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SOME ABBREVIATIONS OF EUCKEN'S WORKS USED IN THE TEXT

The Problem of Human Life . . . . = *The Prob. of H. Life.*

The Meaning and Value of Life . . . . = *The M. and V. of Life.*

Life's Basis and Life's Ideal . . . . = *Life's Basis.*

Main Currents of Modern Thought . . . = *Main Currents.*

Other titles are quoted in full.

INTRODUCTORY HISTORICAL SKETCH

In explaining the ideas of any philosopher it is in the highest degree essential that there should exist in the reader's mind a suitable background against which the teaching in question may stand out in clear relief. For the sake, therefore, of those who have made no special study of the history of philosophy, it will be desirable to attempt a very brief historical outline leading up to Eucken's own position. In so doing I shall confine myself to that aspect of philosophy which is especially important to an understanding of Eucken's thought. It is thus hoped that this sketch may not be entirely useless even to those to whom any ordinary outline of the history of philosophy would be the merest repetition.

The Problem of Nature and Spirit

Rudolf Eucken's thought centres round the great and ancient problem of *nature and spirit*. Is nature (that is, the world of matter

seen in the light of science) the true basis of reality, of which spirit, if it be allowed to exist at all, is a bye-product ? Or is spirit the source and fundament of all reality, nature being ultimately dependent upon an invisible world ? This is the great alternative.

In placing this decisive question in the centre of his whole work, Eucken at once puts himself into the closest touch not only with the philosophical and scientific problems of to-day, but with all the great philosophies of the past. For the attitude which a thinker will adopt with regard to any given problem must be decisively influenced by his answer to this question. It will be immediately obvious, to take a few examples, that his views upon the nature of reality, the problem of knowledge, the relationship between mind and body, the freedom of the will, the nature of personality, the basis of ethics, the immortality of the soul, and the religious problem, will be radically affected by his belief or disbelief in the existence of a spiritual principle as the root of reality.

There is abundance of evidence to show that from the very earliest times the problem of nature and spirit, in some form or another, has been a subject of intense human interest. In

the primitive races, while it was commonly believed that soul and body were quite distinct and separable realities, no clear distinction was made between nature and spirit in the modern sense of the terms, because the soul was regarded as itself a more or less ponderable thing. There is room for controversy, however, as to how far primitive man really regarded the soul in a material sense.

The Early Greek Thinkers

The history of European philosophy begins with the Greek physicists of the sixth century B.C., who were the first thinkers to attempt a systematic, rational explanation of the universe. Their efforts tended in the direction of monism ; they fixed, in turn, upon various substances (such as water, air and fire) which they believed to constitute the basis of reality, and the human soul, like the rest of the universe, was classed as a manifestation of this basic substance. This monism tended sometimes towards spiritualism and sometimes towards materialism. Heraclites, for example, gave philosophy a decidedly spiritual turn ; and his conception of fire as the basis of life reminds one very forcibly of Bergson's view of the *élan vital*. He it was who said : " It is

wise to hearken not to me, but to my word, and to confess that all things are one"; "The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one"; and "All human laws are fed by the one divine law."

Idealism and Materialism in Ancient Greece

It was not long before Greek thought fell apart into two sharply opposed tendencies, corresponding, roughly, to materialism and idealism. On the one side Democritus and Protagoras gave to the Ionian philosophy a thoroughly materialistic turn, reducing the whole of life, including the human soul, to a system of moving atoms, and denying the possibility of immortality. On the other, Pythagoras, Empedocles and their followers laid peculiar stress upon the uniqueness and independence of the soul, and the existence of an invisible, spiritual realm.

Plato

This intensification of the problem helped to prepare the way for Plato, with his sharp separation of life into the material and spiritual planes. He performed a great work of synthesis by the construction of a philosophical system which included all the main

tendencies of early Greek thought and sought to render them mutually compatible. Plato placed the centre of reality in the spiritual world, which he conceived of as being an independent realm superior to the sensuous or merely phenomenal world, which is a changeful and shadowy reflection of the eternal reality. The human soul belongs to the spiritual world as its true home, and dwells only temporarily in the lower world of phenomena. Upon the subject of Plato's view of the soul I may, with advantage, quote a few sentences from Professor McDougall's *Body and Mind* (p. 19) :—

"... his teaching as to the purely immaterial and immortal nature of the soul is clear enough. The soul of man, though it is in some sense derived from the world-soul, is not merely a ray of the universal energy, life, or mind, as it appears in the systems of the Ionian philosophers. It is a self-contained individual being, the ground of personality ; as such it exists in the realm of pure Being before incarnation ; from that realm it brings the knowledge of the ideas manifested in reminiscence ; and as such it endures through all the vicissitudes of its successive re-incarnations."

Plato first clearly perceived and systematised that great truth of the existence of a spiritual world of absolute values, above and

beyond all the imperfections of the human sphere, a world in which our earthly life first discovers its real meaning. He was influenced to a considerable extent by ethical considerations, and deeply felt that great need for a clear separation between the spiritual and the natural which has invariably been experienced by thinkers capable of fathoming the more profound needs of the soul ; for the desire for an unshakable spiritual reality which shall stand out clear above the apparent chaos of ordinary human conditions is ineradicably planted in the human spirit. However arbitrary his system may appear to the reader of to-day, he set humanity a task which raised it above all materialism, individualism and subjectivity.

Plato in relation to Eucken

Eucken, like other idealistic philosophers, follows Plato in his insistence upon a realm of universal and absolute truth, towards which we must strive and in which we find our true being, in the stress laid upon the spiritual life of the individual, and in the recognition of a sharp distinction between the spiritual and the natural spheres. The Greek thinker's intellectualism and transcendentalism find,

however, no echo in the teaching of the Jena philosopher; for the difficulty of bridging the gap between the superior spiritual world and the inferior sphere of phenomena left Plato's system branded with the sign of an abstract intellectualism, a defect which has clung, as we shall see, to his idealistic followers. In Plato we trace in cold, clear, simple outlines those central and abiding philosophical problems which subsequently became so much deeper, wider and more complex. And, in particular, we have our attention fixed here, in peculiarly striking fashion, upon that great antithesis of spirit and nature which runs through the whole history of religious and philosophical thought.

Aristotle and his Followers

Aristotle's abandonment of the Platonic world of independent spirituality did not have the hoped-for effect of creating a well-established unity, and in his devotion to the world of external reality Plato's great successor prepared the way for the fatal dualism which was to wreck Greek thought. The followers of Aristotle gradually lost their hold of any objective spiritual reality, with the result that

they fell back into various forms of subjectivism, such as Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism, types of thought which could not long satisfy a people who had been accustomed in the past to a life in close touch with positive spiritual ideals.

In Eucken's *The Life of the Spirit* (p. 210) we read :—

> " The whole course of Greek history presents us with the spectacle of the gradual retreat of the sensible world before the spiritual. In the beginning the sensible world took complete possession of man, but the craving after spiritual self-preservation drove him to the elaboration of a super-sensible world."

Plotinus and the Problem of Spirit and Nature

In its later stages Greek thought increasingly perceived the real centre of life to lie in the super-sensible world ; but, as we have already noted, there arose a great difficulty in relating the higher spiritual world to the natural world in which man is compelled to live and work, and this resulted in an impossible dualism. This difficulty was very vividly present to Plotinus (b. 205 A.D.) ; and his school (Neo-Platonism), which may be looked upon as a European form of Hinduism, represents an

attempt at its solution along mystical and ascetic lines, an endeavour to transcend the dualism through an absorption of the subject in a transcendental world. The contrast between spirit and nature is here carried to its greatest extent. Plotinus' system marks the logical completion of that process of retirement from the material world which went on, as Eucken says, through the whole of Greek history. He bade man seek satisfaction in a spiritual reality remote from all sensuous interests—here he would find the real centre of his life, and not in that lower world which the Neo-Platonists looked upon as a shadowy emanation of the transcendent Being. Perhaps the most valuable element in Plotinus' thought is his deep and inspiring conception of the human soul. Although dwelling on a lower plane of existence, man was able, he declared, to enter into direct mystic unity with the Divine reality, and indeed his chief task was to liberate himself from all earthly ties in order to attain to this transcendent unity. A powerful impetus towards asceticism and self-purification thus flowed from the Neo-Platonic school. Man's highest goal was to lose himself in an ecstatic contemplation of the universal reality. That such a tendency

—though containing elements of immense value which were essential to the development of the race—is open to many grave objections must at once be clear. In such a devotion to a vague cosmic unity, devoid of all specific attributes, the individual necessarily withdrew himself from the life of this world and ceased to exert any influence upon it, whether for good or evil. Moreover, in its divorce from every sort of tangible reality and in the abandonment of the idea of positive love, the inner life itself necessarily underwent a lamentable impoverishment. The concepts of God and of human personality were in the last degree negative, and were obviously incapable of giving rise to any positive activities.

Christianity

While Greek thought was thus turning to a species of sterile mysticism (carefully to be distinguished from Christian mysticism), which was virtually equivalent to a surrender of the task of life on this earth, there was arising in Europe, in the form of Christianity, the greatest spiritual force that the world has ever seen, a force destined speedily to swallow up the pale, white flame of Neo-Platonism in a glowing fire of triumphant faith and love. The

Greek world had, finally, failed in the central task of philosophy and life, namely, the *reconciliation of nature and spirit.* It had left the gap unbridged.

Christianity and the Problem of Nature and Spirit

An entirely new turn was given to the whole situation through the ascent of Christianity. Plotinus had taught that man must leave the world in order to find God. But the significance of Christianity lay in the doctrine that God had descended to earth to seek and save man. Neo-Platonism called upon man to raise himself towards God; while the new religion proclaimed the stooping of the Divine towards the human in an act of redemptive love. The former led to a melting-away of the human in the Divine; the latter to a permeation of the human by the Divine. Historical Christianity bridged the gap between nature and spirit by its teaching of the incarnation of the Perfect Spirit in the world of nature. The great antithesis now gave way to an at-one-ment. The whole of human existence now acquired a new meaning and value: "Christianity for the first time reveals a

complete knowledge of Divine Being; a deification of man" (Eucken).

St. Augustine

In the philosophy of St. Augustine (who has exerted no little influence upon Eucken) we see abundant evidence of the great spiritual deepening and of the new valuation of humanity which Christianity brought into human life. Augustine placed the human soul in the centre of his system, and devoted himself whole-heartedly to the development of the individual in the deepest sense of the phrase; he thus raised philosophy above the cold intellectualism of the Grecian schools and made it intensely real and personal:—

> "Happiness, blessedness, this it is upon which the whole thought and passionate longing of the man are concentrated—happiness, not in the restricted sense of the earlier Latin fathers, but as the complete satisfaction of the inner nature, as the vivifying of all the powers, as blessedness extending to the deepest foundations of being." (*The Prob. of H. Life*, p. 211.)

From the point of view of our problem no further developments of great importance took place until the Modern Era, which opened

with the Renaissance, the Reformation and the revival of scientific studies.

The Modern World

The central fact of the new period was the breaking away of the individual from the authority of the mediæval, ecclesiastical system. This emancipation showed itself in two main directions. In the first place it took a religious form in the Reformation, which was a demand for a more intimate and personal relationship between the individual and God, and a reaction against the rigidity of the papal organisation. As Eucken expresses it : " a passionate longing arose for immediate access to God, a burning thirst for a saving miracle of infinite love and grace " (*The Prob. of H. Life*, p. 275) ; and this produced a new, more personal and more human type of life. We read further, on p. 277 : " The chief characteristic of the new life is freedom, so that Melancthon could say in so many words, ' In the end freedom is Christianity ' ; freedom not as a natural property, but as a favour and gift of God ; freedom not of the man in himself, but of the Christian man." The second manifestation of the new spirit is the general movement of modern European

civilisation, as seen, for example, in the doctrine of the rights of man, in the development of free-thought, and in the ever-growing demand for the emancipation of the individual. Modern industrialism (more especially in its earlier phases) is one of the least desirable aspects of the same general tendency, exhibiting, as it does, individual liberty carried to the point of brutal egoism.

With the development of the new era along more independent lines, the old problem of nature and spirit, which was more or less in abeyance as long as the mediæval system sufficed to satisfy men's minds, again forced its way to the front. And in its new form the problem gained immensely in depth and complexity.

Spinoza

Spinoza sought to raise man above the level of mere nature by basing his life upon reason, which he regarded as the universal spiritual reality; and he developed an intellectualistic system, with Neo-Platonic affinities, in which salvation is to be awaited from pure knowledge, a system resting upon a belief in the entire rationality of existence and in man's capacity to live in complete harmony with the rational principle.

Kant

Kant pursued an opposite path. He held that reason was concerned with the natural world only, and that it could in no wise cross the gulf between nature and spirit; the universals which it seems to give us, and upon which Spinoza leant, being true only for *us*, as representing *our* method of viewing reality, and possessing no real objective validity. But, he explained, man is not only a thinker, he is also a *doer*; he is moral as well as intellectual. And it is as a moral being that he is able to apprehend a genuine spiritual reality. Kant stands, therefore, for moral action as the method by which the antithesis of nature and spirit may be overcome. Eucken has many points of contact with Kant, and, on the other hand, few with Spinoza.

Fichte, Schelling and Hegel

Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, in spite of much that divided them, stood, in the main, for the same conception of the problem with which we are more immediately concerned. All three looked upon the ultimate reality as an expanding or evolving spiritual life, progressing according to its own inherent laws. We note

(and this is most important) that the concept of reality has now lost the rigid and static form which it possessed in the antique world. The basis of existence has now become a self-subsistent thought-process, developing through the interplay of opposites ; although objective, this process works within the human soul-life. Hegel placed the idea of an independent, self-developing thought in the very centre of his system, which thus acquired what Eucken regards as an excessively formal, intellectualistic and impersonal character. We shall see, however, that in many very important respects our philosopher is subject to Hegelian influences—for example, in his view of spiritual life as a force ever striving towards expansion and growing through antitheses.

The Trend towards Materialism

During the nineteenth century men were occupied to a much greater degree than had ever before been the case with the things of the material world. Wonderful advances were made in technical science ; steam and electricity revolutionised life ; the human race threw itself with immense ardour into the betterment of the external conditions of life ; the democratic upheaval and the rise of

socialism were signs of the times. Along with all this there went an undue absorption of man in the world of nature, a forgetfulness of his inner life often carried to the point of a determined attempt to reject the whole idea of the soul and of any spiritual reality, as being entirely fictitious. This so-called realistic tendency, which is still immensely influential throughout the Western world, aims at a construction of life exactly opposed to Neo-Platonism. Plotinus called man to a life entirely divorced from nature. Realism would place him wholly in nature.

Spirit and Nature in the Modern World

Just as the Ancient World closed with a *denial of nature*, so the Modern World has been led to a *rejection of spirit*. But neither of these two solutions is capable of truly satisfying humanity. Thus—with an important difference—we again find ourselves confronted with the identical problem of the reconciliation of nature and spirit with which we were dealing at the outset of this historical sketch. The difference consists in the enormous deepening which has taken place upon both levels: our conception of nature has been enriched beyond measure by the discoveries

of science ; while the developments of religion and philosophy throughout the centuries have opened up to us an incomparably wider view of the spiritual world than was visible to the ancients.

NOTE.

Historical Influences in Eucken's Thought.

The *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1912, contained an article in which Baron v. Hügel gave an account of the historical influences which have been of importance in the formation of Eucken's thought. In the ancient world he mentions Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus ; and in the modern world, Kant, Fichte and Hegel ; but most decisive of all is the Christian influence, derived mainly from the Gospels, St. Paul and St. Augustine. Of considerable significance is Eucken's rejection of ethical monism (Leibniz and Spinoza) and his inclination towards a dualistic conception of ethics, as evidenced by his enthusiasm for Plato, St. Paul, St. Augustine and Kant. Modern thinkers related to Eucken are Windelband, Tröltsch, Siebeck, Boutroux, Royce, and Pringle-Pattison.

RUDOLF EUCKEN:
HIS PHILOSOPHY AND INFLUENCE

CHAPTER I

LIFE AND WORKS

Eucken's Boyhood

RUDOLF EUCKEN comes of the Frisian stock, a branch of the German people closely related to the English, and long noted for their freedom-loving instincts ; and his racial origin no doubt has its bearing upon the practical and ethical character of his philosophy. He was born at Aurich, a small country town in the extreme north-west corner of Germany, on January 5th, 1846. His father died when he was very young, and, in common with so many other noted men, he owes a great deal to his mother, a woman of exceptional mental and emotional qualities, who, in the face of considerable difficulties, enabled her son to obtain

the advantages of a prolonged education. The boy attended a good school in his native town, and while there was influenced to a most important extent by Wilhelm Reuter, a deeply religious thinker and a pupil of the philosopher Krause. Eucken has himself said of Reuter, that he was a man with "such force of personal conviction that he left on every spiritually sensitive nature an ineffaceable impression." While still very young, and even before he came under Reuter's influence, Eucken was warmly interested in the problems of religion and philosophy. As he grew older his interest deepened, and before he left school he had read very considerably along these lines.

Student Days

On proceeding to the University of Göttingen, he devoted himself for the most part, however, to classical philosophy and ancient history, although he found time to attend the philosophical lectures of Lotze, with whom he did not feel himself in sympathy. Before taking his degree at Göttingen, he went to study for a time at Berlin. Here he came into contact with Trendelenburg, who was at that time a great power in the philosophical world,

and to the famous Aristotelian Eucken owes much of his interest in Grecian thought and of his lifelong determination to keep philosophy in close touch with history and with social and moral questions.

Academic Work

After working as a High School teacher for five years, Eucken was appointed, in 1871, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Basel. Three years later he received a call to a similar position at Jena, and from 1874 down to the present day he has remained loyal to the beautiful and historic little town by the Saale, notwithstanding temptations to transfer his influence to other and larger universities. For many generations Jena has occupied a unique position amongst German towns in consequence of its associations with literature and philosophy, and there is something peculiarly suitable in the town which is inseparably connected in history with the names of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling, having been for so long the home of Germany's most celebrated living thinker, a man who has laboured all his life to conserve, to strengthen and to develop the principles of German idealism. Here Eucken has

lectured for thirty-eight years; and here he has written all his more important works.

Eucken's Writings

It was as a student of Aristotle that our philosopher first came before the public, with two pamphlets published in 1870; while his inaugural address at Basel dealt with the significance of Aristotle's thought for the life of to-day, and was followed, in 1872, by a work upon the Aristotelian method. After taking up his residence at Jena, Eucken directed his attention more towards the history of philosophy in general, publishing a history of philosophical terminology, a number of essays on the early German philosophers, and, in 1878, the work called *Die Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart*, which was subsequently so much altered in character and extended in scope that it became a new book, and in its most recent form was translated into English by the author of the present study, under the title of *Main Currents of Modern Thought:* as originally conceived, this was a historical work, but when re-written it took on the form of an introduction to Eucken's own position, linking up his teaching with the development of philosophy throughout the

ages. In 1888 there appeared the first of the great constructive works: *Die Einheit des Geisteslebens in Bewusstsein und Tat der Menschheit*—"The Unity of the Spiritual Life in the Consciousness and Action of Mankind"—(which was, however, preceded, in 1885, by an important little introduction called *Prolegomena zu Forschungen über die Einheit des Geisteslebens in Bewusstsein und Tat der Menschheit*). In this fundamental work, which has not yet appeared in English (though much of its content is brought into the later books), Eucken criticises, at great length, naturalism and intellectualism, rejects both, on the ground of their neglect of personality, and then proceeds, in systematic fashion, to lay the foundations of his own *personal idealism*. This was succeeded, two years later, by his most popular book, *The Problem of Human Life* (translated by Professor Boyce Gibson and Professor Hough), which deals in an extraordinarily sympathetic and illuminating fashion with the great philosophers of history and the value of their teaching for our modern life; there have been nine German editions. This work reveals the close connection which Eucken establishes between philosophy and life, and, while not directly constructive, it

enables us to understand the influences which have helped to mould our philosopher's mind. It marks the end of his historical period. A new and more complete expression of Eucken's own convictions appeared in *Der Kampf um einen geistigen Lebensinhalt* (1896). Eucken was now devoting himself more to the consideration of religious questions, with the result that in 1901 he published a lengthy exposition of his religious philosophy—*The Truth of Religion* (third improved edition, 1912, translated by Dr. Tudor Jones). This was followed, in 1907, by a somewhat more popular account than had hitherto appeared of Eucken's own philosophical teaching, namely, the work which was published in England in 1911, with the title, *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal* (translated by Alban Widgery); and the same year produced a small book on the religious question: *Christianity and the New Idealism* (translated by Professor and Mrs. Boyce Gibson). A very useful summary of Eucken's ideas is *The Meaning and Value of Life* (1908), and this was succeeded in the same year by *The Life of the Spirit* (translated by F. L. Pogson). Of importance for the study of our philosopher's attitude towards Christianity is the short

Can We still be Christians? (1911, translated by Mrs. Boyce Gibson). The two most recent works are *Knowledge and Life* (translated by Dr. Tudor Jones) and *The Theory of Knowledge*, the former being preparatory to the latter (which has not as yet been published in English). There are also a number of interesting pamphlets, lectures and articles. A selection of the more important of these will be published shortly in English (edited and translated by the author of this study).

Eucken's Personality

No account of Eucken's thought would be complete which contained no mention of his personality. The union of philosophy with practical life is one of his central aims, and, true to his conviction, Eucken reveals in his own personality the unflagging effort, the thoroughness, the spiritually directed and inspired activity, the faith, and the deep intuitive sympathy which are the proper fruits of a philosophy such as his. The great Jena thinker has been endowed by nature with faculties which peculiarly fit him for the task which he is performing; a rare combination of intellectual depth and keenness with emotional insight and sensitive sympathy has

made it possible for him to develop a philosophy which is scientific and logical, yet plastic and intuitional, a view of life which can satisfy the intellect without ignoring the experiences and needs of the heart and conscience. Professor Eucken has about him as little of the traditional German *Stubengelehrter* as can well be imagined. He is no dried-up pedant absorbed in his pet theories; but a man intensely alive to the outer world and full of sympathetic understanding for all those, of every class and every nation, who come into contact with him. Most characteristic of him, as indeed of all the truly wise, is his remarkable and unaffected simplicity of mind and character, his deep reverence, and his sense of humility. Notwithstanding his many years of arduous intellectual labour, which have left his hair as white as snow, Eucken is still young in spirit; and of all the many aspects of his personality perhaps the most delightful are his optimism and enthusiasm.

CHAPTER II

NATURALISM

We may perhaps best commence our study of Rudolf Eucken's philosophy by explaining that he seeks, in the first place, to solve two fundamental problems with which the preceding historical outline has already made us familiar. He enquires as to the existence of a *fundamental spiritual reality*, underlying all the changeful appearances of life as we see it, and he asks the question : *What is the relationship between spirit and nature ?*

Modern Attempts to formulate a Philosophy

Eucken's method is experiential rather than merely rational. He calls our attention to the fact that in the modern world we find ourselves face to face with various attempts to discover a unity, and to provide a systematic explanation of the whole of reality. Each of these starts at a certain point with a certain assumption, and upon this basis endeavours to effect a synthesis of the whole : thus

materialism takes the facts and laws of physical science as its basis, and thinks to include the entire universe within the framework they provide, while intellectualism takes its stand upon a belief in a universal reason immanent in man, and seeks to develop this until it shall include the whole of life and experience. Each of these would-be syntheses meets with a measure of success; but at last there arrives a time when it comes into contact with portions of life which obstinately refuse to be squeezed into the system; in other words, it is found that the basis of unity has not been sufficiently comprehensive. At the very outset Eucken reveals himself as an anti-intellectualist, for he maintains that it is not so much rational argument which secures the defeat of these partial attempts at unity, as the actual content of existence as we ourselves experience it. The great systems of speculative philosophy, for example, have failed to command general assent not so much on account of any logical imperfections, as because they have not been able to satisfy the demands of man's inner nature, and have thus failed to cover the whole of reality. Any philosophy which would offer man permanent satisfaction must do justice to the whole

length, breadth and depth of life, and must be able, without violence or distortion, to include the entire content of existence, as revealed not only by the physical sciences, but by art, morality, religion, and the whole inner life of man.

Eucken's Attitude towards Naturalism

With the purpose of obtaining a more definite conception of Eucken's thought, we will consider, more in detail, one of the most important of the now existent attempts at unification, namely *naturalism.* This mode of thought, which is at present struggling with the various idealistic and religious movements for predominance in modern civilisation, contends in the main that the world of the senses, as interpreted by the methods of physical science, is the only true basis of reality, that there is no spirit in the proper sense of the term (all psychic life being looked upon as a mere bye-product of physical forces), and that man is not essentially more than an exceptionally intelligent animal. The higher is thus made entirely dependent upon the lower. Under this system there can, of course, be no future life, no freedom of the will, no spiritual religion and no morality

which goes beyond utilitarianism. Being an attempt at a world-philosophy, naturalism endeavours to extend itself over the whole area of human life and activity:

"The naturalistic type of life extends from the most general of impulses to every branch of activity, and forms every department of life in a distinctive fashion. Knowledge depends entirely upon experience; every speculative element must be excluded as a subjective illusion; in all its branches, knowledge is nothing else than a broadened natural science. Art may not pursue imaginary ideals; it finds its single task in the faithful and pure reproduction of the natural environment. Social life and endeavour will develop, above all, natural powers, and will seek to adapt itself to the conditions given by nature, and rejecting all aims based upon mere imagination, it will care chiefly for the physical welfare of the whole, as the source of all power and of all success." *Life's Basis*, p. 28.

The Syntagma defined

It will be well to explain at this point that Eucken uses a special term—*syntagma*—for such an attempt to unify life upon a specific basis; and he has defined the word in *Die Einheit des Geisteslebens* (p. 5):

"By syntagmas we understand systems of life, consolidations of historical reality which comprehend the multiplicity of existence within a specific framework, and from this standpoint impart a

characteristic form to all separate phenomena. A syntagma is essentially different from a ' tendency ' or ' movement,' for it sets out to provide an explanation of the whole content of life down to the last detail and does not rest satisfied with indicating certain paths or supplying an impulse in this or that direction ; as a complete system it endeavours to be all-sufficient and exclusive. It therefore leaves no one neutral, but compels him to take sides ' for ' or ' against.' "

As examples of syntagmas one might mention, in addition to naturalism, Greek philosophy, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and Roman Catholicism. This concept plays an important rôle in Eucken's thought, and we shall return to it later in greater detail.

The Advance of Naturalism in the Modern World

It is, of course, obvious that in modern times many important factors have contributed towards the strengthening of the naturalistic system. Among others we may recall the enormous strides that have recently been made in all the physical sciences, the waning influence of the traditional religions, the general concentration of humanity during

the last century upon the external and material side of life, and the accompanying neglect of all the problems of man's inner life. These and many other factors have given naturalism such an appearance of simplicity and inevitability that its triumph over all religious and idealistic conceptions of life is widely taken for granted.

Naturalism does not include the whole of Reality

But the fact must not be lost sight of that naturalism claims to be a logical, scientific explanation of the universe, and that it is on this ground that we are asked to accept it and the conclusions which follow from it. Our first question must therefore be: Does this system of thought really provide such an explanation? Now in *Main Currents* Eucken indicates two major reasons (not to mention minor ones) which compel him to answer this interrogation in the negative. In the first place, naturalism does not solve the problem of knowledge, either on its metaphysical or its psychological side; it neither bridges the gap between subject and object, nor elucidates the mystery which surrounds the unity of consciousness. Secondly, this system fails to

do justice to the full content of life: while covering a certain aspect of reality, and that by no means the most important, it necessarily leaves out much that is absolutely essential—in particular it neglects many of the actual facts of man's inner life, as seen both in the individual and in history. On p. 235 of *Main Currents*, Eucken writes:

"Passing on to the second main objection we find ourselves face to face with a problem which goes yet deeper down. It is the problem of the content of reality. Naturalism and monism agree in conceiving this content as something far less significant than it really is. They ignore what (to those of another opinion) is of primary importance—the life of the spirit. Their position being that all inner life is no more than an adjunct of nature, they are compelled to treat the psychical life as a mere process taking place within each separate individual. In pursuance of this line of thought they lay stress upon the indefinable nature of the boundary between the animal and the human, and point out that what was formerly looked upon as a human heirloom has in reality slowly worked its way up by a historical process of evolution, and that even the civilised man remains to a very great extent under the power of natural instincts. We extend our full recognition to the foregoing and have no desire to diminish its importance. But it is not the whole. For the life of the human soul does not remain in a state of dis-

integration and confinement to separate points, as does that of animals: it results in an integration and the formation of a common life, which in turn develops an immeasurable wealth of concrete fact, displaying essentially new features as compared with the merely natural world. History and society, in their distinctively human sense, would be impossible without this integration. In its absence, how could speech be employed to communicate thought and how could human culture have developed at all? Upon this basis is built up a vast and complicated system of human activities, such as law, morality, art, and science. These separate activities have (like the whole) their own laws, problems, and experience. They bring men face to face with difficult tasks; they exercise an increasing attraction over him, and in return make him into something immeasurably greater than he was; from being a mere fragment of nature he becomes more and more a spiritual being, and in this capacity he inwardly experiences the infinite, while as a moral personality he is gifted with the power of converting the world into personal action. Such a profound transformation as this necessarily reveals a new aspect of reality. It is clear that man has now entered upon a *new stage* in the progress of the world, the recognition of which must essentially enlarge and deepen his general conception of the whole. This is no mere theory. In the course of the historical and social development of man as we know it, reality has actually been thus unfolded and has worked itself into the institutions of life, forming a developing force which surrounds us with a thousand influences.

To bring this inner solidarity of human life to full recognition was the chief task of German speculative philosophy. It was conscious of having reached a far higher level than the Enlightenment, because it explained spiritual contents and values by reference to this solidarity and not, like the Enlightenment, by derivation from the mere individual.

"Naturalism, however, overlooks this rise of the spiritual life, this development of a specific stage of civilisation, this inner growth of man through the work of millenniums, and ignores the whole wealth of reality thus revealed. From the point of view of naturalism, all this is simply non-existent, or at any rate it receives no systematic appreciation. We are given a picture of the whole which disregards everything specifically human, everything spiritual and everything which imparts a content to life. This involves a terrible restriction and impoverishment of life. It signifies a rejection of the whole inner content of history and an abandonment of everything in which humanity seeks its greatness. Naturalism constructs and rounds off its conception of the cosmos without taking man into account—and then, with his distinguishing characteristics as far as possible eliminated, he is squeezed in as well as may be! We speak of reaction when we see life being screwed back to some old stage of being already inwardly obsolete. Yet all such attempts to confine life to an outworn historical position are modest indeed compared with this attempt to chain life down to its prehistoric beginnings, and so deprive it of all chance of inner elevation and true development. When contemplated from this standpoint,

the whole of human history, with all its characteristic features, is seen to be nothing but a colossal error, a complete departure from truth, since it has more and more deceived man by holding up to him an inner world which is in reality a mockery and a delusion."

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS MAN ?

Man is More than a Mere Fragment of Nature

THAT man is to a large extent bound up with nature is a fact so obvious that it need not detain us. But Eucken, as we have seen, asks the question : Is there not in man something which is *more* than a derivative of natural processes ? And he maintains, in answer, that, in the first place, the fact that man *knows* is evidence of the presence within him of a quantity transcending nature. For nature shows a juxtaposition and succession of events, and does not exhibit that power of rising above separate events, reviewing them, linking them together, and making of them a unified system of knowledge, which is peculiar to man ; Eucken, therefore, holds that even this most ordinary activity of human consciousness, not to mention man's higher faculties, signifies a transcendence of what the scientist understands by nature : " there must be a unity of some kind ruling within us ; but the mechanism of nature can never pro-

duce such a unity" (cf. p. 69). The demand for unity and logical order latent in man cannot be explained as a mere product of natural causes. The common statement, made from the standpoint of a mechanical theory of evolution, that man's inner life is a mere means for adapting him more perfectly to his environment, cannot be accepted as an explanation; for this purpose it would not, as a matter of fact, be in the least necessary. Is a man, with all his complex mental development, more in harmony with his environment than is an oyster?

The Fact of an Inner Life in Man

When we pass on to the consideration of moral and spiritual values, of man's power not only to perceive life as it is, in systematic fashion, but to judge what life *ought to be*, we must realise that we are in contact with an actual *fact* which is absolutely incompatible with any naturalistic explanation of the universe. That very "judgment of Ought" which is seen in the almost universal human dissatisfaction with the mere routine of self-preservation, a feeling unknown in the animal world, is in itself a proof that we carry within ourselves a "something" more than nature.

For how can nature sit in judgment upon nature? And why should man alone, of all the innumerable forms of life, refuse to be content with the task of self-preservation?

"So far as man belongs to nature, his conduct is determined solely by the impulse to self-preservation; every movement must either directly or indirectly tend to the welfare of the individual; . . ."—*Life's Basis*, p. 119.

Now we all of us know that men can and do act in direct and conscious opposition to the instinct of personal self-preservation; nay, what is more, they do so with a profound consciousness that their action constitutes the highest affirmation and enrichment of their own lives; in losing their lives they find them. The case of a Father Damien, who left behind him all the comforts of civilisation to give his life to the outcast lepers of the South Seas—people who from the standpoint of mere racial preservation would have been better left to die—is hard to explain upon a purely naturalistic hypothesis! How indeed are we to account at all, in this fashion, for all those innumerable human actions which run directly counter to the law of nature? A dog fights another dog over a bone or over the right to occupy a certain garden; but men

die cheerfully by tens of thousands in the defence of moral and spiritual ideals which have not the remotest connection with any life-preserving instinct. Consider the case of the Crusades, when enormous masses of men deliberately abandoned everything to which nature bound them, and laid down their lives in the pursuit of a religious idea. Or to take an example more congenial to modern tastes: a missionary will go to a remote and dangerous country for no purpose other than the inculcation of his views of spiritual truth. Must we not conclude from a consideration of the mere *facts* of human life, altogether apart from any metaphysical theory, that in man there is revealed a new and higher kind of life than that known upon the so-called natural level? And in particular must we not recognise the reality and practical efficacy of values independent of nature's mechanism of utility, values in which man realises his own inner life?

The Idea of Truth

In the spheres of art, science, metaphysics, and morality, we find further important evidence of the uprising in man of a new, spiritual world. The idea of a *positive and absolute truth*, as sought by science and

metaphysics, is inexplicable as a mere utilitarian product. In science with its universality, and its vast network of rigid relationships, we see a system of super-individual truth which has come to birth within the human mind, acquiring for itself a real independence of man's subjective nature and constituting a stage of spiritual reality.[1] It is precisely in rising above the level of utility and self-preservation that our deepest life begins—the only life, in fact, which is anything more than an (in itself) absolutely meaningless routine of working, eating, sleeping, and racial propagation.

"In the development of a self-consciousness and of a movement of life itself, we rise above the motive of utility, by which nature is swayed. It is a moral element in the widest sense; it is the consciousness of something objectively necessary, unconditionally transcending the ends of the narrowly human, that first gives to convictions axiomatic certainty and to conduct the right energy."—*Life's Basis*, p. 129.

Logic and Conscience

Particularly interesting examples of this more than natural life in man are to be seen

[1] It is most important to remember that the term "spiritual," as employed by Eucken, includes intellectual, æsthetic and moral aspects of reality, and is by no means confined to the sphere of religion.

in logic and conscience, which from Eucken's standpoint are lower and higher manifestations of spiritual reality upon the natural level. The former forces us, with an absolutely irresistible compulsion, to conform our thought to fixed, super-individual norms, thus raising us, in an intellectual sense, above the stage of mere natural inclination ; the latter performs for us an identical service in the moral sphere ; and both mark the emergence within man of a world of *real*, independent and imperative values into which he must be reborn if he is to realise himself.

The Great Question : What is Man ?

The crux of the whole matter lies in the great question : What is man ? If he be no more than a mere fragment of nature, a link in a chain of mechanical processes ; if he be wholly absorbed in the utilitarian task of self-preservation ; then his existence is totally meaningless. If, on the other hand, man bears within him the possibility of participation in a *universal spiritual life*, independent of the mechanism of the natural level, our conception of his being, his work and his destiny must be entirely revolutionised.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Spiritual Life a Fact

It is thus clear that man perceives within himself evidence of a reality other than that of sense experience ; and we have agreed to call this reality *spiritual life.* The exact nature of this life, in its entirety, will no doubt remain beyond the scope of human concepts. But the term will serve to describe a phenomenon which we have perceived to exist as an actual fact of observation. However difficult it may be of definition, the spiritual life, as Eucken interprets it, is no abstract concept, but a definite portion of human experience. It is deduced not from metaphysical speculation, but from the study of life itself, as seen in social existence, history, morality, science, art and religion. If this fact of the *actuality* of the spiritual life, of its continual operation in the world around us at this moment, be clearly grasped, the reader will be on the way to a proper understanding

of Eucken's thought. For the great Jena teacher is concerned above all things with *life itself*, and not with intellectual abstractions.

The Negative and Positive Arguments

In common with all fundamental propositions (such as the statement that we ourselves exist !) the reality of the independent spiritual life is incapable of a direct, reasoned proof. The assumption of its reality can, however, be justified by the convergence of two lines of argument. One of these is negative and the other positive. In the first place it can be shown that every attempt to provide a rational explanation of life collapses, involved in contradictions, in the absence of this assumption—which is thus seen to be nothing less than a necessity of thought (see *Main Currents*). In the second place (and in addition to the argument from man's nature, dealt with in the preceding section), Eucken makes it clear

" that the thoroughgoing recognition and explication of this axiom exercises an invasive and uplifting influence on life, that all life's manifold activities converge to this new starting-point, and, in so doing, for the first time become capable of a clear, connected, and complete development. The greater the variety of movements which converge to the

same point, the more sure can we be that we are not dealing with mere illusions."—*The M. and V. of Life*, p. 84; and see the constructive works in general, such as *Die Einheit des Geisteslebens*, *Life's Basis*, *The Life of the Spirit*, and *The Truth of Religion*.

The Spiritual Life as a Unifying Force

The first characteristics of this life are its universality, its imperativeness and its movement towards unity (as seen, for example, in such manifestations as man's moral sense or the laws of logic). It is an original force which has been a whole from the beginning, and must not be conceived of as having been evolved or built up from natural elements. This trend towards unity, this ceaseless unifying activity which works within us whether we will or no, is not explicable as a mere summation or combination of isolated units, but is itself the creative and synthetic power which first makes the union of elements on the sense level intelligible. We must not picture unity as a product of multiplicity, but multiplicity as an outgrowth of unity. Eucken reverses the method of empirical science, for he explains the lower through the higher, instead of attempting to deduce the higher from the lower.

The Spiritual Life the Centre of Reality

The reader must think of the spiritual life as a living, working, creating, self-active, vital energy, which, at its highest level, possesses the attribute of personality (see p. 191). Far from being explicable by any merely intellectual process, such a process can be valid only in so far as it is in harmony with this parent energy, which is as much the source of all truth as it is of the entire realm of nature. The spiritual life is not, as a materialistic science would assume, an annex of a reality other than itself, but is itself the very core of all reality. Here we find ourselves at the very centre of the universe, at a point where the whole of reality is self-immediate. Here the antithesis of nature and spirit is transcended, both being seen as aspects through the interaction of which the whole realises itself. Here there exists a self-sufficient eternal life superior to space and time, and alone imparting meaning and value to all that occurs in that lower level of being which is confined within space and time. It is this invisible spiritual reality which "sustains, dominates and unifies the visible world." Upon this reality man and nature are dependent, for it itself constitutes

the innermost essence of their being. In Eucken's own words, " a spiritual life transcending all human life, forms the ultimate basis of reality," and the recognition of this life is the first step towards all further knowledge, and the first necessity of any adequate view of life as a whole : " *the corner stone of all philosophical thought and the axiom of axioms is the fact of a world-embracing spiritual life.*"

There are Different Stages within the Spiritual Life

Spiritual reality must not, however, be thought of as present in full perfection at every point of the universe. This would be an entire misinterpretation of Eucken's convictions. It is true that all reality is ultimately spiritual, but at the same time existence is redeemed from a " dead-level " condition, in which all things are equally good and perfect, by the fact that spiritual life manifests itself in different stages of expression. And these stages are not in harmony with one another. While there is a constant upward movement towards spirituality and self-activity, a movement which is inherent in reality, the lower or natural stages, which have not yet attained to self-consciousness,

resist this elevation, and thus we get opposition, tension and division. To overcome this opposition, active spiritual effort is demanded. It is most distinctive of Eucken's thought that the development of reality is not looked upon as a smooth, natural process taking place calmly, peacefully and inevitably—as is assumed by pantheistic thinkers—but, on the contrary, as a conflict, an actual struggle for supremacy between opposing forces, a battle, tending now in one direction, now in another, and the issue of which may long be in doubt. It is true that the upward movement cannot permanently be suppressed, but for long periods it may be held back by the opposing forces.[1]

[1] Cf. Professor Boyce Gibson, *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life*, Chap. X., from which the following passages are taken: "No just conception of the meaning which Eucken attaches to this fundamental concept (*i.e.*, of the spiritual life) can possibly be gained so long as we fail to bear in mind that the spiritual life, however deep and divine our conception of it may be, is not an oppositionless experience, but shares, *qua personal*, the essential characteristic of all personal activity—that, namely, of developing dialectically through self-diremption and self-return. . . . Hence to conceive the spiritual life aright, we have not to abstract from its oppositional quality or conceive it as developing apart from the pain and the evil, the ignorance and the ugliness, which it resists. The oppositions which stimulate and perplex our mortality are themselves part of our immortal substance . . . [This life] is more than any of its oppositions. It cannot side with one pole against the other, since bipolarity is of its essence."

Man's Part in the Whole

Now Eucken's philosophy pivots more especially about *man's part* in this scheme of things. Man is no mere passive spectator of this great world-process. He plays an essential rôle in the great drama. Situated, as we have seen, at the point where spirit and nature meet, and ever reaching out towards the spiritual reality which is at the centre of his being and yet which he can never wholly grasp, his position is full of doubt and complication. He is so far tied down to the sub-spiritual level of nature that he cannot realise his own inward reality without a reversal of his whole being, yet at the same time there dwells within him an upward-driving energy which entirely precludes the possibility of his remaining permanently contented upon the sub-spiritual level. It is true that the spiritual life is the very core of human personality. But it is not for that reason easy for man to attain to it ; for a man can face no task more difficult than the discovery and realisation of his own innermost self. Let him find and develop the indwelling spiritual reality, however, and he becomes a participator in a new world of cosmic activity,

a realm of super-individual truth and of absolute values. His life now acquires a totally new significance. The otherwise isolated individual man bases himself upon a solid and unchanging foundation, and becomes independent of the ever-shifting world of appearances which is proper to the merely natural level of existence.

Eucken's Philosophy defined as Activism

In order to attain to this spiritual world (of which every human being is a potential member) man must fight a battle; he must overcome the resistance of his non-spiritual nature, which acts as a constant downward drag. We cannot participate in the spiritual life without incessant and *active* effort; hence the name—ACTIVISM—which Eucken has accepted as distinctive of his type of thought.

The Spiritual Life more than Intellect, or any Human Faculty

This absolute spiritual life which is thus immanent in man must not be identified with any partial aspect of human mentality, such as intellect or will. Spiritual reality requires for its development all human faculties, which find their only true function in subserving this

development, but it must not itself be compared with any faculty which has been evolved by humanity in the natural realm. That which the whole may need for its own self-realisation must not be identified with the original whole; the qualities of the human subject are agents of the spiritual life, but they have no real meaning except as parts of an inclusive reality.

"This whole develops itself through the agency of the antithesis of subject and object, of power and resistance, but it remains superior to it, and holds both sides together even while they are divided."—*Main Currents*, p. 58.

This corresponds with the general character of Eucken's thought, with the idea of a development through antithesis, active effort and conflict, rather than through any quiet and regular growth, or through any merely intellectual process.[1]

The Problem of Truth

Eucken's view of truth is in harmony with the general principles of Activism. Truth is

[1] The following passage from *Main Currents*, p. 153, is most important and characteristic: "That which our labour does bring us, however, does not come as the result of reflection, but of pursuing chosen paths to the end. Both our ability and our limitation are revealed to us only through the developments and experiences of life itself. It is more especially true that

not a given reality needing merely to undergo intellectual assimilation. It is not capable of being grasped at any one moment as a complete possession. For truth lies in the spiritual life, and this, as we know, can never be wholly appropriated by man. Truth is a reality towards which he is ever striving, but which never falls entirely within his grasp :—

> " The truth that never can be proved
> Until we close with all we loved,
> And all we flow from, soul in soul."

Our progress towards truth is an ascent. The truth itself, as conceived by Eucken, is, however, in no sense subjective or pragmatic ; it is absolute and unchanging ; man's relationship to it is, however, necessarily uncertain and progressive. Man may be said to attain to truth in so far as he enters into the self-active spiritual life ; and from this point of view the problem of truth is the problem of self-realisation. In striving towards truth we approach the unity of existence. Thought alone cannot enable us to realise truth, for this realisation is more a question of spiritual power than of intellectual acuteness. " All

it is through struggle alone that our life fathoms its full depth. Resistance alone drives it to put forth its whole strength and compels it to exercise its full originative power."

real knowledge involves a spiritual creation, an advance, and a self-formation of life as a whole." The test of truth is not conformity with any intellectual scheme, after the fashion of the old metaphysics, but the capacity to elevate life, to effect new syntheses, to overcome the oppositions of the lower level of reality.

Eucken rejects Pragmatism

At the same time, his view of the spiritual life holds Eucken well away from pragmatism and all allied movements, to which at this point it might easily appear that he was tending. He utterly rejects every philosophy which would in any sense whatever conduce to the viewing of truth as a *means* :—

" The essence of the conception of truth, and the life and soul of our search after truth, is to be found in the idea that in truth man attains to something superior to all his own opinions and inclinations, something that possesses a validity completely independent of any human consent ; the hope of an essentially new life is thus held out to man, a vision of a wider and richer being, an inner communion with reality, a liberation from all that is merely human. On the other hand, when the good of the individual and of humanity becomes the highest aim and the guiding principle, truth sinks to the

level of a merely utilitarian opinion. This is destructive of inner life. All the power of conviction that truth can possess must disappear the moment it is seen to be a mere means. Truth can exist only as an end in itself. 'Instrumental' truth is no truth at all."—*Main Currents*, p. 78.

The driving power of the movement towards truth is found not in rational thought, but in the instinct of spiritual self-preservation, which is rooted in the immanent spiritual life :—

"In the discussion of questions of principle, each disputant is, at the bottom, defending himself and his own inherent character. It is from such spiritual self-preservation that power, warmth and passion first stream into the intellectual movement."—*Main Currents*, p. 90.

The Need of the Age for a Positive Basis

It is Eucken's profound conviction that the life of to-day needs, above all things, a secure positive basis. But this basis cannot be found in human life as we see it, in the multiplicity of appearances and partial truths by which we are surrounded. There is therefore a necessity for metaphysics. We must press forward to the world of unity which lies behind the phenomenal world. Any system of thought, such as pragmatism, intellectualism

or voluntaryism, which bases itself upon a point within the world as it is given, will inevitably fail to embrace the whole, to effect a real unification ; these systems will always meet, sooner or later, with portions of reality which they have left out of account, and thus their inadequacy as complete philosophies of life will become apparent ; they will be refuted, not by argument, but by the exposure of their own inherent limitations. But a philosophy which, rejecting the world of first appearances, bases itself from the very outset upon the ultimate reality which is the author of all separate phenomena, will be in no such danger. It will be associated with no particular phase of multiplicity, but only with the unity which lies behind all multiplicity. It is true that man cannot straightway grasp this unity ; but it is the true function of philosophy constantly to keep it before us as the goal towards which humanity should unceasingly progress.

The Spiritual Life only imperfectly expressed in the World

Throughout the whole of history, and in the life which surrounds us at the present day, we see numbers of attempts on the part of man

to develop spiritual life within the human sphere. Different religions, different systems of philosophy and morality spring out of man's restless desire to give concrete form to the creative and synthetic energy which ever pulsates within him, seeking modes of self-expression. These constructions of reality, these attempts at synthesis, come into conflict with one another, discover their limitations, re-mould themselves, or die and give way to others ; thus there is an advance of life and a deepening of reality in the midst of the chaos of opinions. Man is so made that he continually strives towards a more and more complete comprehension of reality :—

" God's gift was that man should conceive of truth
And yearn to gain, catching at mistake,
As midway help, till he reach fact indeed."

These complexes or concentrations of spiritual life derive their value not from their connection with humanity, but from what they perform for the more perfect expression of the spiritual life. Religion, knowledge, morality and so forth take on a new aspect when regarded from this standpoint :—

" The value and the truth of a particular religion will be judged in the first place by the nature of the spiritual substance that it offers, and the degree in

which, in its advance, it is able to join itself to the movement of life as a whole and to guide it further." —*Life's Basis*, p. 158.

This method of estimation—which will be further elucidated as this work proceeds—is applied by Eucken to whole historical epochs, to peoples and civilisations, and to individuals.

An Attempt to illustrate the Spiritual Life by an Analogy

It is by no means easy for those who are not thoroughly familiar with Eucken's thought to form a clear conception of the spiritual life as he understands it. As is usually the case with great thinkers, his concepts are capable of being interpreted in somewhat varying fashion according to the individual peculiarities of his readers. The following paragraph has been written with the purpose of conveying to the reader's mind, however imperfectly, some concrete impression of the spiritual life as it has presented itself to my own mind—a task upon which I dare not embark without first safeguarding myself by pointing out that all attempts to elucidate philosophical ideas by means of analogy are necessarily imperfect and are apt to become dangerous if pushed beyond the point intended.

Let us consider the spectacle presented by a modern army in the field as it appears to an entirely ignorant observer, knowing nothing of the methods of modern warfare. It is no more than a heterogeneous assemblage of men, guns, horses, waggons, telephone installations, heliographs, aeroplanes, balloons, field hospitals, portable bridges and so forth, scattered more or less loosely over an area of perhaps a hundred square miles. Thus viewed, each particular section, or company, or battery would seem to be moving in a manner independent of the whole, feeding itself, providing its own ammunition and following the direction of its own officers; the system of messages and signals by which one isolated unit—possibly in occupation of a position thirty or forty miles away from the centre of operations—is kept in continual touch with headquarters, would be entirely invisible, and its existence would not be so much as suspected. Such external observation would naturally fail to perceive the immense and complicated network of relationships which, in reality, holds the army together, gives it its significance and enables it to achieve its purpose. In the absence of an inner understanding, many of the activities of the various units would

appear incomprehensible, and movements that were, as a matter of fact, executed in obedience to orders from headquarters as part of a complete system of strategy, would seem quite unaccountable. If an outside observer remained ignorant of the great organisation of telephones, telegraphs, orderlies, staff officers, and so on, which forms, as it were, the nervous system which guides and unifies the whole great army, sending out directive impulses from the governing centre, and receiving information from all the outlying points, still less would he suspect that in a tent at the controlling base there sat a man, a commander-in-chief, a personality in whose mind all that immense network of directing energies came to a centre.

Now Eucken's spiritual life presents itself to my mind as being closely analogous to the invisible and personally controlled network of communications which directs and unifies an army, feeding each separate portion, and assigning to it its specific task in the scheme of the whole. Human life and activity, viewed in a merely empirical fashion, appears as a mere conglomeration of detached events, the individuals taking part in it as isolated units. But on penetrating behind the veil of

appearances, there is discoverable a world of spiritual reality which imparts meaning to the flux of phenomena and upon which humanity depends for power and guidance. Just as the detachments of an army are powerless when cut off from their communications, so, in human life, the individual cannot fulfil the real purpose of his existence unless he be in touch with the universal spiritual life which is the substance of his being. The parallel may well be taken a stage further. The commander of an army depends for the fulfilment of his purposes upon the *active co-operation* of his men, who are not only subordinates, but also co-workers. And such is the position of humanity as understood by the Jena philosopher. The spiritual life cannot develop its purpose without the co-operation of the human race. Man is called upon actively to assist in the development and spiritual elevation of the universe, and it is precisely in this task that our life finds its true depth and acquires meaning and value. Moreover, just as in the case of the soldier, it is entirely fruitless for man to act as a detached unit; it is absolutely essential that he should subordinate himself to the demands of the spiritual life, no matter how far these may

run counter to personal desires and natural inclinations :—

"If the spiritual life has no intrinsic superiority to merely human affairs, no idealism can exist, and along with it disappears the whole meaning and value of our life. . . ."—*Main Currents*, p. 114.

Human beings must measure themselves by a realm of absolute values. Such subordination can never involve a loss of personality or a negation of self-development (in any true sense of the term), since it is nothing other than this self-same spiritual life which constitutes the centre of man's being, however much this centre may be dominated, in only too many cases, by non-spiritual forces pressing upon it from the periphery. It is in serving the ends of this superior reality that man discovers his only lasting satisfaction.

The reader must not, of course, suppose that this illustration, crude as it is, does anything like full justice to the fact (for it is as a *fact*, and not as a mere concept, that Eucken would have us think of the spiritual life) with which we are dealing ; and it no doubt emphasises the governing and controlling aspect of the spiritual life somewhat at the expense of its immanence ; for this life, as we have already seen, is not only a unifying and sustaining

activity, but also an indwelling force. It also fails to bring into prominence the opposition which exists between the natural and the spiritual levels of life, although this might to some extent be represented if we thought of the soldiers as being too much attached to their own comfort and convenience to find it easy to participate in the higher and nobler aims of their commander !

CHAPTER V

MAN AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Position of Man in the World

In man's position we perceive an inner contradiction. He is tied to nature ; yet he feels compelled to yield allegiance to something higher than nature. The development of history shows the progressive emergence in humanity of a " more than human," and a conflict between this and the merely human.[1] The work of human culture has involved an increasing effort to base life upon this spiritual standpoint ; it has not been (so Eucken would insist) a gradual growth and development, a becoming more and more intellectual, refined and spiritual on the part of the natural man, as some evolutionists would have us think, but rather a struggle to seize a higher reality which has been a whole from the commencement— " change (and with it evolution) is absolutely out of the question as far as the substance of

[1] Cf. the exceedingly illuminating treatment of this question by Benjamin Kidd in *Social Evolution*.

spiritual life is concerned"—and is not an outgrowth of nature.

Man cannot abandon the Spiritual Life

If it be asked: Why should man struggle to ascend to this spiritual world; why should he not remain contented upon the natural level?—the answer is that he has, ultimately, no choice in the matter. The spiritual life is so bound up with human nature that we could not abandon it if we would:—

> "I know this earth is not my sphere,
> For I cannot so narrow me, but that
> I still exceed it."

Man himself, in the very centre of his being, is rooted in a world transcending that of first appearances (the natural world pure and simple); and it is impossible for him to realise his own personality, to fulfil his own needs, without making this ascent. In every age man has sacrificed the mere comfort of this animal level in pursuit of the Good, the Beautiful, the True, the Eternal, the Absolute. And in this quest he has discovered his own greatest happiness.[1]

[1] Eucken would endorse Mr. G. K. Chesterton's forcible criticism of pragmatism:—

"I agree with the pragmatists that apparent objective truth is not the whole matter; that there is an authoritative

Man is the Meeting-place of Spirit and Nature

Man, as seen from the standpoint of the activistic philosophy, occupies a position of peculiar difficulty and complication. He is surrounded by a world in which spiritual reality can manifest itself only in a limited and highly imperfect fashion; yet at the same time his instinct of spiritual self-preservation demands that he should hold fast to this reality, for it is his only foothold in a world of changeful appearances. To grasp this Absolute becomes increasingly difficult in proportion as he allows himself to be dominated by the life of the natural level; yet it is upon this level that he is compelled to live and work. He is the victim of a most painful inner contradiction: "Man stands at once *in time* and *above time*." There is an antithesis of the sharpest kind between the natural man and his humanistic civilisation, on the one hand, and, on the other, the spiritual life, with its peculiar demands.

need to believe the things that are necessary to the human mind. But I say that one of these necessities precisely is a belief in objective truth. The pragmatist tells a man to think what he must think and never mind the Absolute. But precisely one of the things that he must think is the Absolute. This philosophy, indeed, is a kind of verbal paradox. Pragmatism is a matter of human needs; and one of the first of human needs is to be something more than a pragmatist." (*Orthodoxy*, p. 62.)

Spiritual Values must be Supreme

The great Jena philosopher steps forward in direct opposition to the general realistic tendency of the modern world, which looks upon the spiritual world (in so far as its existence is acknowledged at all) as an agreeable, but by no means necessary, adornment to a life already based upon the natural level, and conceives of religion and spiritual culture, in general, as things which it may be quite laudable to cultivate, if one can spare the time, but which have no vital connection with the real business of life. Over against this whole view of existence Eucken sets up a new standard of values. He calls upon men to distinguish between what is primary and what is secondary and to transfer the centre of gravity of life to the primary or spiritual level. It is in fact man's specific task to effect this transference in the face of the opposition which is inherent in the lower stage of reality.

The World resists the Spiritual Life

The recognition of a powerful resistance on the part of the world to the emergence and realisation of spiritual values is an essential and characteristic feature of Eucken's philo-

sophy, and imparts to his view of life much of its definition and vigour. It brings it, moreover, into close touch with the traditional Christian view of the enmity between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world. And in the history of the Christian Church we perceive a good example of the universal resistance which human life offers to the progress of a new and higher manifestation of spiritual life ; the old systems of thought resisted with all their might the growth of the new and wider embodiment of reality, yet without being able to arrest the process, impelled, as it was, by an overmastering inner necessity—their opposition, in fact, served only to assist the triumph of Christianity.

Pantheism and Personality

If this element in Eucken's thought draws him near to the traditional religious view, it repels him violently from every sort of pantheism, from every attempt to identify spirit and nature, to regard the divine as wholly immanent in the given universe. Pantheism, in all of its many forms, leads inevitably to an obliteration of the distinction between good and evil and to the elimination of personality as a real factor in the develop-

ment of the universe, and Eucken stands in the most uncompromising fashion for the significance of this distinction and for the strengthening and deepening of the concept of personality.

The Spiritual Life demands Man's Co-operation

We have already seen that activism regards nature and spirit as lower and higher stages of a single all-embracing life, and that it is the character of this life to work upwards, to become self-conscious, to effect its own self-realisation. In this ascent man plays a specific part. He stands where nature passes over into spirit. And his active participation is essential to the movement of elevation. His work is to raise reality to the new stage. However independent the spiritual life may be in itself, it does not express itself here and now without the aid of man. Human evolution is no mere " unwinding of thread from a reel "—on the contrary, it is a *creative work* in which man is a co-worker. Life brings with it a constant introduction of new material, and is not a mechanical working out of a given system.

"Further evidence of man's free appropriation of the spiritual life and his inner at-one-ment with it is conspicuously present in the fact that its development in our midst is conditional on his own work. . . . However certain it be that the basis of man's work must be laid within a spiritual over-life, yet the precise form which it takes must be determined by his own struggle. His effort is not something reared like a pyramid upon a given foundation. It does not rise up undisturbed, never deviating from a certain prescribed direction. For doubt is ever attacking the foundations afresh, and confusing even the main bearings. We must, then, be constantly reaffirming the spiritual character of our life: the situation in which we find ourselves to-day shows this very clearly. . . . The universe presents itself in man variously sundered and graded. It becomes all-important to shift upward the centre of gravity in his life, thereby enabling him to co-operate in the construction of the universe. Without man's participation and decision, the movement at his particular point can make no further progress."—*The M. and V. of Life*, pp. 98—99.

Man is a Creative Worker

The reader will perceive the significance of this aspect of activism. Man is thereby raised out of the mechanism of nature to a position of creative responsibility. Acting through his moral and religious personality, man exercises a formative influence upon reality. But in

order to exert this shaping force, he must rise above nature and lay hold of the superior life which works within him ; for the natural man is not free, he is swayed this way and that ; selfishness, ambition, vanity, the animal passions, hold him in a grip of iron, inhibiting the development of his spiritual self, and so long as he remains subject to nature he possesses no originative capacity.

. . . .

Eucken's Philosophy in Four Stages

The reader may find it useful to think of Eucken's philosophy as divisible into *four fundamental stages :—*

(1) The break with the merely natural life ; the negation without which there can be no spiritual experience.

(2) The recognition of an independent but indwelling spiritual life ; the new birth which is the beginning of all positive religion and morality.

(3) The free, active and personal appropriation of the spiritual life.

(4) The organisation of human life and civilisation in the interests of the spiritual life and subject to its norms ; *the overcoming of the antithesis between spirit and nature.*

CHAPTER VI

SPIRIT AND MATTER

I.—Introductory

The Growth of Materialism in Recent Years

It may be assumed, without serious danger of contradiction, that never at any time in the known history of the world has the philosophy of materialism, in some form or another, attained to such an extensive influence as that which it exerts at the present moment. To-day this view of life is accepted, not perhaps as a theoretical system, but, what is much more important, as the working principle in all practical affairs, by immense masses of the population in every civilised country. The widespread rejection of religious tradition has thrown innumerable persons back upon what they naturally (though quite erroneously) regard as the only indisputable reality, namely, the immediate world of nature. At the same time, large numbers of thinkers have come forward to provide popular and easily

comprehensible theories of life on the basis of matter ; and a public unacquainted with the deeper aspects of reality and unaware of the inner contradictions of the materialistic systems, but just beginning to think for itself, has swallowed without hesitation explanations of the universe which possess the fatal merit of a *superficial* simplicity. Yet we should be making a grave mistake if we supposed that the spread of materialism in popular circles is due solely, or even mainly, to intellectual causes. A very large share in the matter is borne by the general conditions of present-day life. The last century witnessed an altogether unprecedented increase in man's power over the external world. Devoting himself of recent years almost exclusively to scientific improvements, to the production of wealth, and to the amelioration of social surroundings, he has more and more neglected his *inner life.* The interests of the modern world have become *peripheral* rather than *central.* The Rev. R. J. Campbell has described the Englishman of the twentieth century in words which most of us will feel to be true :—

" The typical man of to-day is so taken up with considerations arising immediately out of his con-

nection with what is of the earth earthy that he is not so susceptible as he once was to the appeal of the purely spiritual. He may be quite a good fellow, kind, upright, and public-spirited ; but he is not by temperament religious ; he cannot be ; his occupations have shaped him otherwise. . . . He is not opposed to religion, but it is none of his concern : all the force of his being falls into other channels."

The Present Reaction Against Materialism

In reality, however, man is not so constructed that he can rest permanently satisfied with a mere dependence upon the external world. All past attempts to base life upon so-called realism, and to put aside spiritual things, have led to an inner emptiness and to a speedy uprising of idealistic and religious feeling. To-day there are abundant indications on the upper levels of civilisation that the wave of materialism has spent its strength, and that even while flooding the lower levels of society, it is, in reality, an ebbing force. The present chapter will deal very briefly with a few of these indications in the world of science.

II.—Vitalism

The Revival of Vitalism

The long-established dominion of materialistic ideas in the scientific world has had the

effect of thrusting into the background a number of most important facts and points of view, and these are now taking a revenge for their neglect by coming to the front with renewed vigour. It is in this fashion that we are to explain the resurrection of *vitalism*, a theory which declares that life is an independent reality belonging to a category different from that of matter or energy.

To mention the names of Eucken, Bergson, Boutroux, Renouvier, W. Roux, Driesch, Lodge, and McDougall is to convey some idea of the exceedingly powerful weight of opinion which is now making itself felt in favour of the distinctive character of life. As Eucken says in *Main Currents* (p. 185) :—

> " It seems to be more and more out of the question that we should conceive of life as a mere property of matter, it is becoming more and more recognised that life must be granted an independent character."

The Distinctive Character of Life

It would appear that life represents a species of being or activity essentially different from anything which could reasonably be expected to result from physical or chemical action. Life stands for a principle of order which creates and preserves definite types.

Thus we may have two seeds, outwardly indistinguishable, but containing within themselves mysterious latent activities which impel them to develop along absolutely different lines, and produce, in each case, with unerring certainty and, as it were, with an indomitable purpose, a specific type of plant complete down to the most infinitesimal detail. Organic life, as we know it, seems to be working always with an object in view, always teleologically. How is such an activity as this to be conceived of in terms of physics and chemistry? McDougall puts the matter well in his valuable work *Body and Mind* (p. 243):—

"This power of persistently turning towards a particular end or goal, manifested in these two ways, namely, in growth and bodily movement, is the most characteristic feature of the life of organisms, objectively regarded. . . . It seems to be quite impossible to explain such apparently teleological behaviour of organisms in terms of mechanism. Nothing analogous to it can be found in the inorganic realm." [1]

[1] *Some definitions of life.*—For purposes of comparison, a few other definitions of life will prove of interest. Thus Sir Oliver Lodge says that in his opinion life "is neither matter nor energy, nor even a function of matter or of energy, but is something belonging to a different category; that by some means at present unknown it is able to interact with the material world for a time, but that it can also exist in some sense independently; . . ." Professor Hans Driesch, of Heidelberg, conceives of organic life as a

The Question of Individuality

Of these facts which were so long kept in the background, one of the most striking is the

species of rudimentary feeling and willing ; it is thus in some sense *conscious* of an end and deliberately makes towards it. This view appears closely analogous to that of the Aristotelian school ; in both cases we have what is practically a soul, which, dwelling within the plant, animal or man, shapes its growth. E. Boutroux finds the distinctive property of life to consist in the creation of " a system in which certain parts are subordinate to certain other parts," a living thing being thus a " hierarchy " composed of " organs " and an " agent." Henri Bergson writes : *La vie est, avant tout, une tendence à agir sur la matière brute* (*L'évolution créatrice*, p. 105). And finally I may give a very interesting passage from Professor Kerner's book on the *Natural History of Plants* (Vol. I., p. 52) :—

" In former times a special force was adduced, the force of life. More recently, when many phenomena of plant-life had been successfully reduced to simple chemical and mechanical processes, this vital force was derided and effaced from the list of natural agencies. But by what name shall we now designate that force in nature which is liable to perish whilst the protoplasm suffers no physical alteration and in the absence of any extrinsic cause ; and which yet, so long as it is not extinct, causes the protoplasm to move, to enclose itself, to assimilate certain kinds of fresh matter coming within the sphere of its activity and to reject others, and which when in full action makes the protoplasm adapt its movements under external stimulation to existing conditions in the manner which is most expedient ?

" This force in nature is not electricity nor magnetism ; it is not identical with any other natural force ; for it manifests a series of characteristic effects which differ from all other forms of energy. Therefore, I do not hesitate again to designate as ' vital force ' this natural agency, not to be identified with any other, whose immediate instrument is the protoplasm, and whose peculiar effects we call life. The atoms and molecules of protoplasm only fulfil the functions which constitute life so long as they are swayed by this vital force. If its dominion ceases they yield to the operation of other forces. The recognition of

phenomenon of individuality. How does it come about that a plant or animal is able to retain its individual form with such remarkable persistency? Its constituents change day by day. Every few months or years, as the case may be, the entire physical structure undergoes renewal. Moreover, an animal may be fed on a great variety of foods and yet retain not only its type but its own specific individuality, and this may be inherited by its offspring generation after generation. What, then, is this individual something which thus persists? These are the commonest of observations, but their full significance is rarely perceived.

The Accumulation of Energy in the Organic World

Most important, too, is the fact that the degradation of energy which is the rule throughout the inorganic world does not hold good in the organic realm. Inorganic changes invariably proceed, under natural conditions, in such a fashion as to diminish the quantity of available energy present in the system. Water flows down hill; heat dissipates itself; after a chemical change the energy in the

a special natural force of this kind is not inconsistent with the fact that living bodies may at the same time be subject to other natural forces."

remaining products is less available than it was in the original substances ; and so on. But where life is present the situation is entirely different. It is now the rule for energy to become accumulated, to be raised to a higher potential. A couple of examples will make the matter absolutely clear. When iron undergoes oxidation in the air the product is iron oxide, which is an inert substance, and has far less potential energy than iron and oxygen ; but when a plant absorbs nutriment in the shape of water, carbon dioxide and other substances, the organic products which it builds up in its leaves and stems contain more potential energy than was present in the original water, carbon dioxide, etc. A still better example of the latter kind of action would be the case of human work ; a man may consume a substance, say, cheese, which contains energy at a comparatively low potential, and may then take a heavy weight to the summit of a high tower, thus raising some of the energy previously contained in his food to a position of immediate availability.[1]

[1] " All life, animal and vegetable, seems in its essence like an effort to accumulate energy and then to let it flow into flexible channels, changeable in shape, at the end of which it will accomplish infinitely varied kinds of work."—Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 267.

III.—Mind and Body

If it is not easy to account for the phenomena of plant and animal life upon the basis of a mechanistic philosophy, the task becomes infinitely more difficult when we approach the problem of human life and consciousness.

The Mind as a Unifier

The salient fact about the human mind is its unifying, synthetic activity. The body, with its eyes, nose, ears and fingers, absorbs a host of impressions from the outer world, and in the mind these are connected with one another and with previous impressions; they are rationalised and wrought into the personal consciousness of the individual receiving the impressions, which thus acts as a unifying, organising entity, ever taking in fresh matter, and ever imparting to it order and relationship. Can it seriously be supposed that such an activity as this is a mere product of physico-chemical action in the brain?

The Central Importance of the Problem of Mind and Body

All those difficult problems which underlie materialism and vitalism come to a head in the relationship of mind and body. Does the

higher depend upon the lower or the lower upon the higher ; does spirit develop from nature or nature from spirit ? This is the question of questions. And nowhere does this central question press upon us more urgently, more immediately and more practically than in the problem of mind and body ; for here it comes into the closest contact not only with physiology and natural science in general, but with ethics, religion, and the whole realm of human interests, whether practical or ideal.

Professor Eucken himself has not as yet, unfortunately, occupied himself to any great extent with psychology, but the problem to which we refer is so directly connected with the fundamental ideas of activism that we shall do well to deal with it very briefly ; moreover, any light which it may throw upon the philosophy we are studying will be all the more valuable as coming from an independent quarter.

The Materialistic View

The early materialists, such as Cabanis, Vogt and Moleschott, looked upon the mind as a definite, material thing, which existed within the brain ; Cabanis wrote, " thought is a secretion of the brain," and Vogt, " there

subsists the same relation between thought and the brain, as between bile and the liver." It goes without saying that such a crude view obtained no very wide credence, and it soon gave way to explanations more in accordance with the possibilities of the case. The most important of these was the theory known as epiphenomenalism and associated with the name of Huxley. This view held that the changes which go on in the physical brain (changes in the nerve cells, alterations of pressure, possible electric conditions, and so forth) are the *cause* of consciousness and of everything which goes to make up what is called " mind " or " soul." Huxley compared the mind to the whistle of a steam engine, considering it to be a mere result of mechanical and chemical processes, and to be entirely devoid of independent reality.

Mechanical View of Life losing Ground

The first point which naturally occurs to us in connection with this view is that it is bound up with the mechanistic explanation of life in general, an explanation which appears, at the present time, to be losing ground rapidly.[1] Large numbers of our most

[1] Some reference has already been made (under Vitalism) to a few of the reasons for this loss of ground. Serious difficulties

prominent men of science, far from seeking to explain the mind according to the principles of physics and chemistry, are rather asking themselves, can we give a complete rational account of the smallest organism, or even of a single cell, according to these principles? Those who refuse to accept the materialistic view of the mind are abundantly justified in saying to those who put it forward: In the first place, will you kindly explain to us, according to your view, the nature and behaviour of *the simplest cell*, and then we shall have pleasure in listening to what you may have to suggest with regard to an entity immeasurably more complex than any cell!

Mind not derived from Matter

But even if the lower forms of life had all been satisfactorily accounted for, there would remain a very formidable army of difficulties peculiar to the problem of mind and body as it presents itself in the case of human beings. We have seen that the materialistic theory assumes at the very outset the entire depen-

have also cropped up in connection with heredity, mutation, restitution, and in general with the whole subject of evolution, which now appears much less simple than was formerly thought to be the case.

dence of mind upon body. And it is just here that it meets with an apparently insuperable obstacle. In what manner are we to conceive of the origin of thought and feeling from matter? It is sufficiently easy to write "consciousness is a function of the cerebral nervous system," but I defy any man to attach a rational significance to the phrase. One thing, at least, is absolutely certain, and that is that consciousness is not a "function" of matter in any recognised sense of the term, and that none of the *known* functions of matter bears the remotest resemblance to consciousness. Such a phrase as this is merely a refuge for ignorance. Every thinking person must be able to realise that psychic states are essentially and utterly different from all the phenomena of chemistry and physics. And if we once adequately realise this important truth, we shall not too readily believe, as is often alleged, that a more complete knowledge of the physics and chemistry of the brain and nervous system will enable us some day to grasp the real nature of mind; for the difficulty is not an insufficient knowledge of the physical aspect of the problem, but the fact that mind and body belong to fundamentally different categories. Natural

science deals with spatial conceptions, while consciousness is non-spatial. As Herbert Spencer said, the differences between mind and body are so important as to "transcend all other differences." The situation, in this respect, was very forcibly set forth by Professor Tyndall in his address to the British Association at Norwich :—

"The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is *unthinkable*. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiments of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain, were we capable of following all their motions, all their groupings and electric discharges, if such there be, and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem—'How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?' The chasm between the two classes remains still intellectually impassable."

It is, of course, an obvious truth that certain mental conditions invariably follow upon

certain physical events ; a blow causes pain, alcohol causes excitement, poison causes death, an accident to the brain may result in insanity, and so on; but however close the correspondence between body and mind may be, it must not be too hastily assumed that the latter is a mere dependent of the former. If such cases as are suggested above tend to prove that the mind is, as the materialists would have it, a bye-product of matter, what is proved by the innumerable cases in which the mind operates as a cause of physical phenomena ? It surely cannot be denied that joyful thoughts promote the circulation of the blood, while depressing ones check it, that the idea of food promotes the flow of the gastric juices, that sudden terror or prolonged mental distress may cause profound physical changes, that disease can be cured, often almost immediately, by mental means, that emotion is a source of fatigue, and in general that the body is in a thousand ways subject to the mind ? In view of such facts as these, it seems impossible to believe that the body is the sole reality. If the mind were a mere offshoot of matter, we could hardly conceive of it as an actual cause in the physical realm.

The Unity of Consciousness

Perhaps the most powerful argument against the materialistic view of the relationship between body and mind is that afforded by a study of the unity of consciousness—a subject to which I have already referred. The mind is in some unexplained fashion able to take in impressions through the various channels of sensuous perception and to build them into a unity. In the case of a person of our acquaintance, for example, we form an idea which is a unity, although it is compounded of aural, visual and other sensations which have entered the mind by quite different channels; on hearing the voice of the person in question we immediately recall his appearance, on seeing him we may be instantly reminded of a song we once heard him sing, and so on. Now there is a very large mass of evidence which goes to show that this unifying process does not take place in the physical brain, but in some unknown psychic medium; the various nerves entering the brain do not run together to a common centre, and on the basis of the materialistic psychology no satisfactory explanation of this extraordinary process of

unification (the central fact of mind activity) has ever been given.[1]

Psycho-physical Parallelism

It is the consideration of such difficulties which has driven many modern psychologists to espouse the doctrine of psycho-physical parallelism, which declares mind and body to be but different aspects of the same fundamental reality and denies the existence of any causal relationship between the two. This view, in one form or another, claims the adherence of many noted thinkers, among whom we may mention A. Bain, Spencer, Höffding, and Wundt. It is usually so inter-

[1] A very full account of this subject will be found in McDougall's work, *Body and Mind*, chap. XXI.

T. H. Green and the Unity of Consciousness.—The matter has been most lucidly dealt with, in its more philosophic aspects, by the late T. H. Green. The following quotation will suggest his position: "If there is such a thing as a connected experience of related objects, there must be operative in consciousness a unifying principle, which not only presents related objects to itself, but at once renders them objects and unites them in relation to each other by this act of presentation; and which is single throughout the experience."—*Proleg. to Ethics*, p. 37. It was, he believed, impossible to deduce this principle of unity from nature, since nature itself, as we see it, is presented to us only through this inner unity: "nature implies something other than itself, as the condition of its being what it is." In other words, only something *outside* nature can *experience* nature. Or as Eucken says, there must be in man something *more* than man the higher animal. This is not a religious statement; it is the basic fact of all science.

preted as to become almost indistinguishable from materialism (as in Haeckel's works, for example), although by assuming the reality which underlies the two aspects to be spiritual it may easily be given an idealistic term. In *Main Currents* Eucken expresses the opinion that this doctrine is not so much an independent explanation as an offshoot of materialism or of spiritualism, according to the manner of its interpretation:

"it (*i.e.*, psycho-physical parallelism) either makes the life of the soul a mere reflex of natural processes, or the latter mere appearances of the spiritual reality; in neither case is it neutral—it approximates either to materialism or to spiritualism."

As regards the usual form of this theory it may perhaps be said, without injustice, that it acts the part of a screen behind which the materialists have endeavoured to hide their retreat from their original position; for the basic reality which is said to underlie body and mind, being quite undefined, serves the purpose of a *deus ex machina.*

Modern Views of the Mind support Eucken's Concept of the Spiritual Life

A great deal more might be said with advantage respecting the obstacles which

confront any attempt to explain the relationship of mind and body along purely natural lines, but space forbids, and I have already, I hope, made it fairly clear that Eucken's recognition of an *independent* spiritual life, far from being a vague metaphysical assumption, is almost, if not quite, a necessity of any adequate explanation of this relationship—the widespread adoption of psycho-physical parallelism is, indeed, practically an admission of this necessity ; for, as we have seen, this doctrine lays particular stress on the fact that the psychical, though parallel with the physical, is not dependent upon the latter.

Eucken as a Monist

The foregoing chapters will have prepared the reader to some extent for Eucken's own position with regard to this problem. He has described himself as a spiritualistic monist ; but he employs this term in a somewhat special sense. On p. 228 of *Main Currents* we read :

"Monism of this type would base itself upon the fact that inner life does not appear merely at separate points, scattered and divided, but that it unites to form a comprehensive connected whole, which reveals, at the level of human existence, a spiritual life elevated above the individual and

with it an inner world rich in its own problems and powers."

The human mind is thus asserted to be no mere reflection of natural processes, but to be, in its true inwardness, a portion of a great superhuman whole, which is the spiritual foundation of the universe. From Eucken's standpoint the natural is a lower stage of the spiritual, and the relation of body to mind becomes the relation of a certain stage of reality to a higher stage of the same reality:

"the same Being which exhibits nature and the natural life of the soul . . . begins in spiritual life to consolidate itself to form a whole and to develop a content. . . . Such an elevation from sub-spiritual to spiritual is no mere speculative demand, but a *task* which claims the whole of human life, for all specifically human achievement, more especially ethical progress, is an ascent from nature to spirit, an elevation of our being from the natural to the spiritual stage."

Here we see with the greatest clearness that Eucken's philosophy is ethical and religious rather than intellectualistic. At the same time, it is essential to remember that the spiritual stage includes the sciences, since they are a spiritualisation of nature: the reader must rid his mind of the idea that the spiritual is, with Eucken, something vague or unreal!

At this point I must again remind the reader of a possible misunderstanding. Man as he is, man on the natural plane, *does not possess this spiritual life without effort.* Although the natural and spiritual may be ultimately but different stages of the one reality, the gulf between them is nevertheless enormous, and it is precisely this gulf which imparts to human life its specific character. In other words, Eucken's monism contains within itself a sharp dualism. It differs very drastically, especially in the importance it assigns to personality and ethical responsibility, from ordinary idealistic monism ; and it is through this difference that it is enabled to avoid the dangers and limitations of intellectualism and pantheism.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLACE OF THE INTELLECT

"The intellectual conflict is an affair of outposts; the real conflict is between ways of living."—EUCKEN.

AN incalculable amount of error and confusion has crept into our whole modern way of thought as a result of the false idea that the human spirit is identical with the intellect, that the latter represents man's true self, and that our whole view of life must be determined by the rational faculty. We have been far too long under the dominion of this pedantic intellectualism, and our life has been marred and distorted by its influence.

Bergson and the Intellect

The modern world has reason to be peculiarly grateful to Eucken and Bergson for their determined resistance to intellectualism. The latter has pointed out that the intellect no more represents the mind as a whole, than the eye represents the body as a whole. Just as the body needs an eye in

order to form a definite image of a particular section of reality, so the mind needs the intellect to aid it in the proper performance of its functions. The intellect gives us, says Bergson, that view of life which will be most useful to us for immediate *practical* purposes, and in this way it is absolutely invaluable ; the process of evolution has in fact developed it for this express purpose. But just as the headlight of a motor car throws a narrow beam of light upon that portion of the road which lies immediately in front of the driver without making the surrounding landscape visible, so the intellect, while assisting us in the process of handling matter, and in the acts of daily life, is not adapted for the illumination of our life as a whole. A fundamental mistake is made, therefore, when the intellect is exalted to the position of supreme arbiter of truth and sole criterion of reality. It is then called upon to discharge a task for which it was in no sense intended.

Intellect and Instinct

Bergson lays great stress upon the difference between intellect and instinct. It would take us far afield to discuss the problem of instinct, but it may be remarked that while intellect creates forms and distinctions in the interests

of the sharp delimitation of a particular section of reality, instinct tends to obliterate distinctions and produce a direct absorption in reality; while the former marks out individual limits and enhances self-consciousness, the latter works in an opposite sense, merging the self in some other reality. For example, when we perform any action with which we are unfamiliar, we make an intense use of the intellect and are all the while keenly self-conscious: a man learning to ride a horse carries out all the necessary movements with deliberate thought, and is only too conscious of the fact that he and the horse are separate entities, for there is, as yet, no instinctive bond between horse and rider; but after lengthy experience the actions which were at first performed with conscious thought become instinctive, the intellect is no longer used, and the man rides the horse without a thought. The man is now in harmony with his mount, and the sense of separateness has disappeared. In the case of an exceptionally good rider we even say that he and his horse are one. This disappearance of separateness, this fusion of subject and object, is seen very clearly in the case of any strong human instinct, such as maternal feeling, or love between the sexes.

Intuition

Such examples as these will help us to see how much more intimate is an instinctive relationship than any merely intellectual connection, and how meagre is any knowledge acquired through pure reason compared with that which may flow in upon us through other channels. Bergson lays great weight upon *intuition* (which is, of course, related to instinct) and seeks to convince us that an intuitive absorption in reality will give us a far deeper knowledge of its nature than that which the intellect could convey to us. It must not, however, be thought that elementary instincts of the kind referred to above are identical with Bergson's philosophical intuition, although there is undoubtedly a certain analogy; the point is merely that the great French thinker seeks to draw near to reality by means of spiritual faculties other than the intellect—the precise nature of instinct and intuition is, of course, wrapped in obscurity. Bergson's point of view has been tersely put by Professor Boyce Gibson in an article in *The Quest* of January, 1911, entitled "The Intuitionism of Henri Bergson":—

"Philosophical speculation must therefore beware of using the intellect as its instrument. The intellect

has been forged to meet practical ends, and no *science* is its true self save as a practical organon. The *intellect* finds its true sphere of usefulness when construing movement in terms of immobility. This is its practical *raison d'être*. The trouble begins only when philosophers drag into the sphere of speculation methods of thought which the exigencies of practical life have hammered into shape."

While Bergson turns to his "metaphysical intuition" to supply a pathway to reality, Eucken would transfer the centre of gravity of philosophy from the intellect to the life-process itself, and more especially to the latter as revealed in man's personality, in the depths of his religious, moral, and artistic nature. It would be a mistake, however, to conceive of our philosopher as a mere anti-intellectualist. His object is not to deny the intellect, but to assign to it a due, and not a disproportionate, importance in the system of life as a whole. Just as the coming of Christianity drew men away from the intellectualism of the Grecian schools to give them an entirely new insight into the universe, and to open up to them an inner life of unprecedented depth and warmth, so Eucken believes that the materialism and intellectualism of present-day life will not be overcome except by a development of the

inner life, and he seeks to lead the man of to-day to an ethico-religious life. It is his first concern to bring to the front again the great question of man's soul and its welfare.

Eucken's Criticism of Intellectualism

In *The Problem of Human Life* we see how Eucken calls the attention of his readers to those great philosophers of the past who dealt in human and spiritual realities, rather than to the elaborators of systems. The sympathy which he bestows upon men like Plotinus, Augustine and Luther, who were no mere thinkers but heroes of the inner life, is in itself an indication of his mental bias. Further evidence in the same direction is forthcoming from a consideration of Eucken's critical attitude towards philosophers of an intellectualistic trend, such as Spinoza, Hegel and Spencer. He finds himself decidedly opposed to Hegel in the latter's attempt to reduce reality to pure thought, and says of Hegelianism (*The Prob. of H. Life*, p. 502) :—

" The system, if forced to abide by the position it has taken up, can offer nothing more than a thought of thought, a radiation of the forms and powers of thought into the universe, a transformation of the whole of reality into a tissue of logical relations.

And this necessarily destroys the immediacy of life in all its forms. It banishes all psychical inwardness and at the same time all spiritual content. It is a dire contradiction of this main tendency when, after all, a world of sentiment is recognised, a spiritual depth, a realm of ethical values. Everything of the kind ought to vanish before this logical machinery."

And he goes on to explain that Hegel's real power was to be found in a "living intuition of spiritual reality," which supplied content and warmth to a cold conceptual structure in which it had no logical status :—

"The secret of Hegel is largely this : that he combines a rigid, apparently iron-bound system with a wealth of intuition, which breaks through again and again with spontaneous freshness and force."

Moreover, Eucken shows marked sympathy with Schopenhauer's repudiation of the too smooth rationalism of the intellectualistic tendency, and with his recognition of all those aspects of life which do not fit in to neatly rounded-off conceptual systems. The latter is a point of some importance, for it throws an interesting light on Eucken, showing us that above all things he respects *reality*. He possesses, indeed, a power rare in professional philosophers ; for he is able to appreciate the significance of inconvenient facts and does not

seek to evade them or to force them into any rigid framework. His criticism of Hegel is peculiarly valuable in that it illustrates, by contrast, a characteristic of activism, namely, that it bases itself upon observed reality and not upon abstract concepts.

Knowledge not obtained through the Intellect alone

At the risk of a little repetition I must again endeavour to remove a possible misunderstanding by pointing out that Eucken does *not* use the term "spiritual life" in the sense in which it was employed by the German speculative philosophers and their followers, as signifying pure thought. It stands for the active, creative principle which is behind the whole universe. To know truth does not mean to make a clear-cut system of concepts and believe that everything not falling within its limits is false, but to enter into as close as possible a relationship with this fundamental spiritual reality. It is more particularly here that we seem to perceive an analogy with Bergson and with the great historical mystics. Consider, for example, the passage on p. 63 of *Main Currents*, where Eucken speaks of the

active, upward movement by which man approaches truth :—

"This striving towards truth has nothing to do with any passive state of being existing independently of all life; rather does reality lie within life, attainable only through life. This life . . . is, however, no merely human affair, for it represents the independent self-life of the whole of reality . . ."

The foundation of knowledge is thus a world-life which entirely transcends man's intellect, and any system of thought which would cut down reality to the measure of our intellect produces a lamentable impoverishment of the content of life.[1]

[1] *F. W. Förster on the limitations of the intellect.*—"Thou must have the courage to be humble, to make it clear to thyself how minutely small is that particular section of life which has come within the sphere of thy tiny mind, how fragmentary is thy experience, how limited and distracted is thy thought by all sorts of prejudices, desires and moods, and how many secrets of life are there of which man can have no knowledge save through sympathetic insight! . . . In questions of ethical and religious knowledge, the intellect, too, must realise the great truth that he who would save his life must lose it. Only when it knows its limitations, abandons its arrogant self-sufficiency and acknowledges the existence of higher sources of knowledge, can the intellect itself be preserved from those errors, abstractions, and negations which disturb the human soul and divorce mental activity from reality. We must remember that Virgil was not able to act as guide through the mazes of life, without invoking the aid of Beatrice."—*Autorität und Freiheit*, by F. W. Förster, p. 86. Förster then goes on to state that one of the great functions of positive and authoritative religion is

Reason and Ethics

After this it goes without saying that Eucken is opposed to the reduction of ethics to a rational science. Our conduct must be based upon something broader and more stable than any partial view of reality, and the intellect, not comprehending the entire spiritual life, cannot serve as the foundation of morality. The relationship between reason and morality is dealt with in a striking fashion by Benjamin Kidd in *Social Evolution*, and his main conclusion is in many respects closely analogous to that reached by the Jena philosopher. Kidd's great contention is that the real social dynamic is to be sought in the basic religious and ethical convictions upon which all civilisations have originally been built up, and that the intellect plays its legitimate rôle only when it assists in the development of these foundations and in their translation into practice; when it makes itself independent and would itself take the direction of conduct into its hands, its activities are pernicious; a healthy

to protest, on principle, "against the intellect being divorced from the life of the soul as a whole, against the separation of the mere thinking process from love, self-knowledge and the fundamental truths to which we obtain access through religion; for rational activity of this sort is destructive of character, of civilisation and even of the intellect itself."

society is one in which the intellect is being successfully held down in its proper position of subordination, a decadent society one in which the individual reason is divorced from the authority of higher truths. I have not space at this point to go into the grounds upon which Benjamin Kidd bases his views, but will recur to *Social Evolution* in the next chapter. Let the reader compare, for a moment, the position just stated with a very important passage in *Main Currents* (p. 85):—

The Dependence of the Intellect upon the Spiritual Life

"Intellectual work itself does not become positive and productive until it becomes an integral portion of *an inclusive spiritual life*, both receiving from that life and contributing to its advancement, until it is guided by the resultant drift of great spiritual organisations and impelled by the energies which originate from these sources. That this really is so, can be proved both directly and indirectly: all genuine intellectual accomplishment has stood in close relationship with movements of *spiritual life as a whole;* on the other hand, whenever the work has allowed such relationships to lapse it has rapidly sunk to empty formalism or uncertain reflection. Such a maintenance of the dependence of the intellect

upon the whole is perfectly compatible with the recognition of its importance and significance within the whole."

Emerson put the matter in a nutshell when he said : " the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself." [1]

Intellect not the Driving Force in History

A very considerable section of the modern public is still under the sway of the old intellectualism, and it will be impossible to build up a positive synthesis of life until we have formed a clear conception of the real

[1] *Evil Practical Results of Intellectualism.*—The disastrous extent to which intellectualism has permeated the modern world is best revealed through a consideration of some of its practical results, a subject into which we cannot enter within the limits of this chapter. The modern examination system constitutes a vast network extending all over the civilised world, serving to hold back from nearly all the higher walks of life, and from many of the superior lower walks, all those young people who fail to exhibit a certain decidedly mechanical type of intellectual ability, no matter how rich they may be in other mental, moral and practical qualities, some of them of the utmost value to the community ; this system has the deplorable effect of causing both teachers and parents to concentrate upon one narrow form of intellectual development, rather than upon moral and spiritual training. The influence of the examination is responsible, too, perhaps, to some extent, for the over-valuation of brain-work in general throughout the whole community, so that we have the spectacle of a nation in which 250 men will apply for a vacant post as a clerk at a poor salary, while large tracts of land are uncultivated for lack of capable workers, and in which women flee by thousands from every sort of wholesome domestic work in order to take up any underpaid, sedentary occupation which will enable them to avoid the despised hand-work.

place of the intellect in life. The secondary rôle which the intellect plays in the process of the spiritual evolution of the race is admirably illustrated in the case of the early development of Christianity. Here we see how a very few men, nearly all of them standing upon a comparatively low level of intellectual development, became possessed by a marvellous, transforming, inspiring, spiritual energy which drove them irresistibly forward to the apparently impossible task of the conversion of the whole world to an utterly new way of life. It remains the most remarkable fact in the whole of human history that in a few years this handful of pioneers had performed a work which changed, for ever, the entire course of human history. Could the philosophers of the early Christian period, looking down from the heights of a cultured superiority upon the despised, simple-minded apostles of the new religion, have foreseen the developments of the future, how great would have been their amazement! With absolute incredulity they would have beheld a world in which they and all their intellectual systems were no more than historical curiosities, but the whole surface of which was scattered with innumerable buildings, the noblest works of

human hands, consecrated to the religion of the obscure Galilean carpenter, and named after those same peasants and fishermen whom they had barely heard of as a group of religious fanatics. In the history of the Reformation, too, Eucken sees an excellent example of "the dependence of thought upon the energy of spiritual life"; he draws our attention to the fact that the great revolutionary energies which rose into being at this time took their source, not in rational and logical considerations, but in a feeling of inward oppression, a passionate desire for spiritual self-preservation, which, breaking down all barriers (*Not bricht Eisen*, as Luther cried), swept over Europe like water rushing from a burst reservoir, and created its intellectual expression out of its own necessities. That Luther, the man of spiritual power and passion, and not Erasmus, the scholar and logician, was the motive personality, he perceives to be highly significant.

Conclusion

The paths by which our philosopher seeks to lead men to a deeper reality than any which intellectualism can reveal will, I trust, be made more or less clear in other sections of this study. The present chapter has served

its purpose if it has thrown light upon Eucken's conception of the intellect as being ultimately dependent upon the content of the spiritual reality which we possess. The real struggle is not between theories and theories, but between personalities and personalities; and in this conflict the victory is not to the intellectualists, but to those who can develop the most powerful spiritual life.

CHAPTER VIII

CIVILISATION

It may be objected to Eucken's view of society, that he is actuated by what John Stuart Mill called "an inordinate desire of unity." It will possibly be urged that unity is not after all so necessary, that mankind can very well afford to do without it, or even that it is better to live in a state of search and uncertainty.

The Need for Unity

Man is, however, by his very nature a *unifier*. The human mind is itself an instrument for the unification of experience. The spiritual life which works in man is unceasingly compelling us towards the task of synthesis. The metaphysical tendency in our nature is an element which can never be crushed. Every philosophical, moral and religious teacher has taken for granted the necessity for some sort of unity; otherwise his office could have had no rational significance. If chaos be superior

to order, why, indeed, should people think at all ?

The very function of thought itself is to unite men in the recognition of truths and principles superior to the opinions and whims of individuals. The disintegration of traditional truths which have long acted as a cement holding society together cannot be regarded as in itself progressive, except in so far as it prepares the way for the formation of a new and more firmly founded body of truth. Such disintegration can be no more than a transitional phenomenon. The duty of the present age is to work towards a new and more comprehensive synthesis of reality. In the pursuance of this object it will be necessary to clear away a great deal of accretion which has gathered around the traditional truths, while at the same time preserving the complete core of the truth itself. To quote from Professor Edward Caird (*The Social Philosophy of Comte*, p. 157) :—

" The hard labour of distinguishing, in the traditions of the past, between the germinative principles out of which the future must spring, and those external forms and adjuncts which every day is making more incredible, must be undertaken by anyone who would restore the broken unity of man's life."

The Essence of Civilisation

The essential difference between a mere conglomeration of individuals and a civilised society is that the latter is built up upon a framework of spiritual life which imparts to it unity and purpose. This framework may be but a very inadequate one ; it may represent the merest fragment of the full content of spiritual life, nevertheless it serves as a uniting super-individual power, and redeems the society which it inspires from chaos and emptiness. In the great civilisations of the past we have examples of such syntheses of spiritual life. Consider, for example, the types of life which grew up under the influence of Greek thought (Hellenism), Indian philosophy and religion, and Catholicism in the Middle Ages : here we have three distinct species of civilisation, each with its own canons of morality, its own metaphysics, its own type of manners and customs, and its own peculiar art and literature. Each of these types represented a specific concentration of spiritual life. Each brought into prominence some aspect of reality which was more or less neglected by the others. Greek civilisation stood more especially for the harmonious development of the given natural content of

life; Indian civilisation for a separation of the spirit from nature, for a passive and speculative type of existence; and mediæval civilisation for a great concentration upon the ethical perfection of man in the light of a new spiritual world of faith and love. All such types of civilisation may be looked upon as attempts at a systematisation and unification of life originating in "an incontestable and fundamental impulse of all spiritual life."

Civilisation as a Concentration of Spiritual Life

The reader will not have forgotten Eucken's use of the term *syntagma*, explained on p. 12, and bearing this in mind we may put the matter in a different form by saying that a civilisation, as distinct from a mere aggregation of individuals, is a specific construction of life based upon a *syntagma*. If I might be allowed to make use of a crude illustration, I would compare such a construction to the act of crystallisation: when a solution of some salt begins to crystallise, the stray molecules which are wandering about at random in the liquid collect around certain nuclei and there build up a united, systematic whole according to the laws which regulate

the growth of crystals ; and in similar fashion the spiritual energies which are all the while seething through humanity and groping, as it were, for a means of expression, concentrate around particular nuclei (*syntagmen*) and thus manifest themselves in definite form as types of civilisation, as organisations of human culture.

A healthy and growing civilisation is one which continues to give more and more powerful expression to the particular syntagma upon which it is based; that is to say, it is a concentrated and purposeful development of basic ethical and religious norms. A decadent society, on the other hand, must be looked upon as one in which the individuals comprising it have cut themselves loose from these norms, thus causing a condition of disintegration. In the case of any given society at any given period, however, the situation may be very complicated. Several different constructions of life may be struggling together for the mastery. Old systems may be breaking down and new ones may be in process of formation. Growth and decadence may be found side by side in the same civilisation. Our present position is, indeed, in the highest degree complicated. In western civilisation we perceive such *syntagmen* as Roman Catholicism,

Materialistic Socialism (which are the two most definite examples), and Liberal Christianity, existing side by side and constantly endeavouring to expand their influence, each believing itself fully capable of taking over the whole of life and looking forward to a time when it shall have driven its opponents from the field. And outside all the definite constructions of life there exists an enormous mass of people who live to themselves, owning no particular religion or philosophy, a mass which has resulted from the disintegration of the old *syntagmen* (cf. the chapter on Individualism). It remains to be seen whether new forces will arise capable of bringing some order into this chaos and checking the process of disruption.

Rudolf Eucken and Benjamin Kidd

It may be worth our while, at this point, to indicate a very striking analogy which exists between Eucken's view of civilisation and that of Benjamin Kidd, as expounded in *Social Evolution*. The distinguished English sociologist occupies a standpoint entirely different from that of the German philosopher, but this should only serve to make the resemblance more valuable. I have already (in the fore-

going chapter) referred very briefly to the fact that Kidd, in opposition to many other social students, sees the motive power of evolution to lie in religious and ethical truths resting upon a "super-rational" foundation and imposing themselves upon men with a compelling spiritual force. It is this force which, in his opinion, enables men to make all those sacrifices which are essential to the progress of society, but which have no ground in the individual reason. The latter is, indeed, an enemy of progress except in so far as it acts as an instrument of the former; for if the individual and his intellect become independent of the controlling spiritual force, the result is moral and racial decay. There appears to be a close connection between this point of view and that indicated by Eucken in such a statement as the following (*Main Currents*, p. 301):—

"Civilisation is genuine only in as far as it preserves its relationship with the basic spiritual life and serves its development, and becomes false as soon as it subordinates itself to the aims of the mere man and drags spiritual life down with it to the same low level. The conflict between these two forces, spirit and man, runs through the whole of history and forces us to perceive in it something other than a pure triumph of spirit."

In Chapter IV. of *Social Evolution* we have

a brilliant and impressive account of the great historical struggle between superhuman religion with its demands, on the one hand, and the "self-assertive rationalism" of the individual on the other; and in reference to this world-conflict Kidd says:—

"Goethe was not speaking with a poet's exaggeration, but with a scientific insight in advance of his time when he asserted of it, that it is 'the deepest, nay, the one theme of the world's history to which all others are subordinate'" (p. 98).

The Function of Religion in the Evolution of Society

Benjamin Kidd's point of view is neither theological, philosophical, nor psychological, but purely and simply sociological. He studies religion only as a social phenomenon. It is his aim to investigate its function in the evolution of society. Commencing with the observation that every people in the history of the world has been profoundly influenced by general belief in some description of supernatural power, he enquires as to the reason of this outstanding fact, and concludes that it would be preposterous to dismiss such a widespread and deeply influential phenomenon as so much foolish aberration; such a light

treatment of the matter would, he asserts, not only be absurd but highly unscientific, for biology itself should teach us that all conduct, whether of plants or animals, has some use, some relation to the great work of evolution—why, then, should man be ranked as an exception? His final judgment is that "religion is a form of belief providing an ultra-rational sanction for that large class of conduct in the individual where his interests and the interests of the social organism are antagonistic, and by which the former are rendered subordinate to the latter. . . ." By "ultra-rational" Kidd evidently means practically the same thing as non-utilitarian, and he is thus in entire accord with Eucken in conceiving the real motive forces of civilisation to be neither intellectual nor utilitarian. That Kidd should see all through the ages such abundant evidence of the potency of an ultra-rational force is a very powerful independent testimony in favour of the truth of Eucken's concept of a spiritual life elevated above man and yet compelling him to action.

Life and the Individual

At the present time the conception of an antithesis between the absolute principle of

life and the unrestrained individuality of each particular being appears to be very much to the front. Dealing with the matter from a psycho-physiological point of view, Stanley Hall has much to say concerning the transmutation of individual instincts into social and spiritual forces, and his educational work is concerned, in the main, with the subordination of the individual to super-individual norms (see *Adolescence*). A fresh light is thrown upon the same central fact by Bergson, with his view of evolution as a creative work. He, too, lays great weight upon the continual antithesis between the narrow, human standpoint of the individual and the demands of the life-process :—

"Life in general is mobility itself; particular manifestations of life accept this mobility reluctantly and constantly lag behind. It is always going ahead; they want to mark time. . . . It might be said that life tends toward the utmost possible action, but that each species prefers to contribute the slightest possible effort."—*Creative Evolution*, p. 134.

In its practical essence, this statement of Bergson's is almost equivalent to Kidd's doctrine of the difficulty which the individual finds in accepting the burden which the task of evolution lays upon him; and the parallel

with Eucken's conviction of the absolute inadequacy of any social system which does not accept super-individual norms is obvious.

Eucken and Kidd may, in a sense, be looked upon as complementary. The former supplies the metaphysical and religious element which the latter has expressly avoided, while the latter, by confining himself strictly to the standpoint of empirical sociology, is able to give the matter a perfectly concrete form. Working thus from opposite poles, they come to one and the same conclusion; namely, that a basis of super-rational and superhuman belief is absolutely essential to the stability and progress of society.

B. Kidd and the Ethico-Religious Basis of Society

Moreover Kidd arrives at a view of the development of society which is closely analogous to Eucken's doctrine of the *syntagma*. On p. 291 of *Social Evolution* we read :—

" Regarding our social systems as organic growths, there appears to be a close analogy between their life-history and that of forms of organic life in general. We have, on the one side, in the ethical systems upon which they are founded, the develop-

mental force which sets in motion that life-continuing, constructive process which physiologists call anabolism. On the other side, and in conflict with it, we have in the self-assertive rationalism of the individual, the tendency—by itself disintegrating and destructive—known as katabolism. In a social system, as in any other organism, the downward stage towards decay is probably commenced when the katabolic tendency begins to progressively overbalance the anabolic tendency."

It is not, in the first place, by means of any intellectual superiority that one ethico-religious system triumphs over another. The victory is to the greatest development of life-energy. Kidd points out that those nations and sections of society which are able to maintain and increase their numbers will gradually rise above those which tend to decrease, and in their rise they will give a wider and wider expression to the beliefs upon which they are based. It is true that numbers do not in themselves create spiritual values. But on the other hand, no ethical or religious construction of life can express itself except through a population in whom it works. We rightly set spirit above matter; but we must yet acknowledge that the spirit cannot realise itself upon the earthly plane save through matter. However little Eucken may have

had such an application in view, there is an obvious connection between Kidd's treatment of the population question and such a statement as we find on p. 92 of *Main Currents* :—

" In spiritual conflicts it is not isolated intellectual considerations that carry the day, but basic life-processes and the content of the spiritual reality which they comprehend ; "

or that quoted at the commencement of the chapter on intellectualism.

The Ethico-Religious Aspect of the Population Question

When thus regarded, the enormous decline in the birth-rate which has taken place of recent years in the educated classes of Great Britain is seen to possess a significance which is not only social, political and economic, but philosophical and religious ; for these classes will carry with them into extinction the moral and religious beliefs of which they are the representatives.[1] Of this process the United

[1] The true significance of this decline has been largely masked by a failure to separate it from the general fall. The general rate has gone down from 36 per 1,000 in 1876 to 23·5 per 1,000 in 1913 ; but the rate in the educated classes, taking the same years, has dropped from about 32 per 1,000 to something like 10 per 1,000 (a number probably well below their death rate). The serious *dys*genic effect of this fall is obvious, and needs no comment. The popular belief that this is solely an economic

States affords a good example: the decay of Puritanism in that country has been brought about not so much by any intellectual rejection of its beliefs, as by the almost universal drastic restriction of the family amongst the Puritan stocks, which are thus being "swamped" by the other European stocks who came into the community later and who are much more prolific; the victory has been not to "intellectual considerations," but to "basic life-processes" and the type of "spiritual reality" they express. Or, viewing the matter from Kidd's standpoint, the ethical system of modern American Puritanism has not been able to resist the disintegrating ("katabolic") effect of a self-assertive rationalism (operating in the form of Malthusianism), with the result that it is being displaced by other systems which are more successful in subordinating the individual to ethical norms.

Remarkable Effects of the Movement of Population in the Anglo-Saxon World

Along these lines there is room for much fruitful speculation. The future developments of ethics and religion may depend, to an

question will not easily be accepted if it be remembered that this decline has coincided with a continual and rapid increase in the wealth of the very classes in question.

extent which has not yet been realised, upon the growth and decay of particular races and sections of society. If, for example, we regard the educated Protestant Anglo-Saxon as the bearer of a specific type of belief and morality, there can be no doubt (even supposing the present birth-rate to be maintained, which seems improbable) that this type is destined virtually to disappear within the next four or five generations; for throughout the entire English-speaking world the birth-rate in the more highly educated classes is probably more than 20 per cent. below the death-rate. Mr. and Mrs. Whetham, in their valuable work *The Family and the Nation*, distinguish, in a hereditary sense, two sections of English society, upgoing and downgoing; the former are those which average more than four children per family, the latter those which average less than that number.[1] The upgoing portion consists, in the main, of Roman Catholics (in all social grades), some foreign stocks, and the poorer classes in general. Who can foresee the extent of the intellectual and religious changes which this state of

[1] According to expert sociological opinion, four children will just maintain a constant population. Improved hygienic conditions would lower this figure a little; but the popular idea that two or three children maintains the population is erroneous.

affairs will bring about? For the growing sections will raise into a position of ascendancy the special types of belief and morality which they represent; while there will be a continual elimination of those constructions of spiritual life associated with the dwindling sections. Moreover, these changes may well take place with great rapidity. It appears that the ordinary English middle-class home contains, on an average, not more than two children (Mr. Bernard Shaw made a census in London, and obtained an average of 1·25; but this is lower than the figures given by others); the Catholic home of a similar class, on the other hand, shows an average of about five children. Upon the basis of these figures we obtain the astounding result that after no more than four generations 1,000 couples taken from the former section will be represented by only about 190 individuals, which amounts almost to extinction; while 1,000 Catholic couples will have given rise to no fewer than some 6,000 descendants! These figures (though only roughly worked out) will convey some idea of the startling changes in belief and thought which may take place as a result of a differential birth-rate operating even for a few generations only. If we agree with the foregoing

view that the vitality of any particular body of people is ultimately an expression of the spiritual reality upon which their existence is grounded, we shall find ourselves led to the conclusion that the Anglo-Saxon race, on its upper levels, is no longer based upon an adequate spiritual foundation. The bearing of the economic question upon the vitality of the race does not invalidate this point of view ; for what is the economic situation but a product of the moral and spiritual state of the people as a whole ?

The reader must not too hastily assume that the foregoing statistical paragraphs are in any sense a digression. It is precisely when brought into contact with the facts of life that philosophy becomes real. And such facts as we have just considered (though not dealt with by Eucken himself) will make us perceive, in no uncertain fashion, that modern culture, if it is to continue, demands new sources of spiritual life, and a new positive construction of morality.

. . . .

Man as the Slave of Civilisation

One of the most immediate difficulties in the way of any reconstruction of civilisation upon

a spiritual basis is the enormous resistance offered by the great network of almost mechanical forces which surround the modern man from cradle to grave. The last two or three generations have seen an incalculable increase in the complexity of business and social life. On every hand a process of "speeding-up" has been at work. Whether life has become deeper and more significant, or even more enjoyable, is, to say the least of it, highly problematical; but no man could deny that it has become more rapid. In fact, so severe is the pressure of present-day life that more than ever before civilisation has become not man's servant, but his master. The modern man has become a cog in a great machine, which runs blindly on with merciless and ever-increasing rapidity, and as it revolves crushes, between its iron rollers, the spiritual values by which men live, a machine which serves no purpose higher than the production of a vast material wealth that only too often demoralises those whom it enriches. The division of almost every kind of work into a large number of highly specialised activities has played a great part in this degradation of life to a mechanical level; the individual specialist has to occupy himself so exclusively

with some tiny branch of a subject that he is apt to lose all sense of his work having any connection with life as a whole. He is only too likely to become one-sided and dehumanised. The modern worker, whether manual or intellectual, is rarely in a position to exercise genuine self-activity, to express his personality in his work ; he is continually being pushed along by forces over which he has no control ; he is no longer a free man, but a slave to his environment. He is so unremittingly marched along by a routine of outward cares and amusements that he has literally neither time nor strength to ask himself where he is going ; nor, indeed, for concentration on any sort of inward life. The multitude of labour-saving devices which have been called into being of recent years should have had the effect of moderating the strain involved in carrying on the work of the community. But they appear to have operated in the contrary direction. The typewriter, for example, instead of enabling the business man to write his letters with greater facility, has merely had the effect of compelling him to write more letters than were formerly necessary. By a curious paradox, the more machinery we invent for saving us time and trouble, the

more strenuous and restless our lives become!

The Over-pressure of Modern Life

The increased burden which the conditions of modern life impose upon the nervous resources of the individual is a matter which bears very directly upon the problems of philosophy and religion, and merits far more attention than is accorded to it. The man of to-day, in the first place, goes through an education which is so much more complex and varied than that of former times, that if it were not for the fact that nothing he does is done really thoroughly, it would be impossible for him to survive the strain. As a rule, however, he does survive, carrying with him into life a more or less undigested and uncorrelated accumulation of information, and a mind, in perhaps most cases, almost totally devoid of every spark of genuine interest and enthusiasm. In the course of his business or professional career he will probably write ten times as many letters and have ten times as many interviews as did his great-grandfather, and, if his position is one of responsibility, be called upon to bear an immensely greater load of worry and anxiety.

In his leisure hours he will read perhaps a dozen times as many books, in addition to innumerable papers and magazines, attend two or three times as many meetings, concerts and social functions, and travel twenty times as far, as compared with the same great-grandfather. Throughout his entire existence his mind is beset by an unceasing stream of external sensations and interests; almost every minute it is called upon to absorb some new impression, to adjust itself to meet some fresh demand. And lastly, the modern man lives in a general atmosphere of economic, social, ethical and religious insecurity which must in itself exercise a deeply disturbing influence upon the higher nerve centres.

Can it be pretended for a moment that all the foregoing does not affect the character, health and mental equilibrium of the modern individual? Are we to believe that his nervous system is so much stronger than those of his forbears that it can endure with impunity a strain so immensely greater than anything to which mankind has previously been accustomed?

Modern Life neglects the Soul

Much of the depression and spiritual exhaustion which makes itself felt in the life of to-day

must no doubt be laid at the door of this pace and overstrain. A type of civilisation has been developed which neglects man's inner life in the pursuit of material things and in the cultivation of external interests: as Eucken writes on p. 107 of *Main Currents*:—

"The nineteenth century, more than any other epoch, enlarged the whole aspect of life and improved human conditions. One would have expected it to close with a proud and joyful consciousness of strength. The fact that it did not do so points to an error in the type of life which dominated the period. This error is to be found in the desire of realism to eliminate the soul. *And the soul will not allow itself to be eliminated.*"

We have fallen into the false habit of looking upon all technical improvement, all accumulation of wealth and all increase in the complexity of life, as in itself a gain, quite apart from its *effect upon man's inner life*—and yet it is in this latter alone that his happiness can exist. This mistaken attitude of mind, which has been encouraged by the decay of religion, the neglect of moral training, and the absurd over-valuation of all the external improvements which technical science has made possible, has led to the erection of a great

system of civilisation which presses with an intolerable weight upon human nature :—

"Modern civilisation in its most highly organised forms has elaborated a system to which the delicate fibre of mind and body is unable to respond,"

writes Mr. C. F. G. Masterman in *The Condition of England;* and the statistics of suicide, insanity and nervous disease are at hand to corroborate him.[1]

The Revolt of the Individual

As the real state of affairs, the true position of man under our present civilisation, has gradually become more and more patent, there has arisen a spirit of revolt :—

"Our own age is making it continually and increasingly obvious that this self-abandonment of man to civilisation is absolutely impossible of accomplishment. Above all the speed and racket of the machinery of civilisation there breaks out with ever-increasing loudness the call for the furtherance and development of the living man, for the building-up of the soul, for the salvation of the spiritual self."—*Main Currents*, p. 296.

[1] The ratio of insane persons to the total population has increased by 98·8 per cent. during the last fifty-three years. This may, it is true, be due to some extent to the greater prolificity of "bad stocks" under modern conditions; but even admitting this, the unnatural pressure of life is a most important factor, since it may greatly enhance inherited weakness which would otherwise lie dormant.

This revolt makes itself felt not only as a demand for a genuine spiritual reality, but also in the form of an exaggerated subjectivism. The individual desires to shake off the fetters of a civilisation which he feels to be mechanical and oppressive, and to develop his personality in freedom. It becomes his aim to "live his life out" heedless of the traditional standards of conduct; and the ideals of duty and discipline sink entirely into the background, to be replaced by a perverted conception of individual freedom. This tendency reaches its culminating point in Nietzsche, and is very strongly in evidence in the works of Bernard Shaw; it colours, also, a great deal of the feminist literature of the day —cf. Ellen Key—and may prove a serious danger to the women's movement, involving, as it does, the disintegration of all positive standards of morality, and the encouragement of subjectivity and egoism.

Subjectivism

If the feminist movement is to make an effective protest against the emptiness and soullessness of civilisation, and to realise its own profound possibilities, it must at all costs base itself upon some more solid founda-

tion than a mere vague, subjective idea of "freedom." Influences of this description are indeed clearly to be traced throughout the whole art and literature of the day; and some of the recent exhibitions of so-called post-impressionist art have given us a forcible idea of the morbid extremes to which art can proceed when it turns away from positive reality. The fatal objection to all movements of this description is that they dissolve the idea of truth. Refusing to recognise any objective and authoritative reality, whether in art, morality or religion, those who live and work after this fashion will inevitably find themselves reduced to the position of elaborating their own religion and philosophy. Each individual now evolves his own necessarily one-sided view of life. And this has the effect of accentuating the very evils which this tendency set out to avoid. For the disappearance from life of any generally accepted basis of thought and action, of any central meeting-ground for the whole community, obviously renders the individual less than ever capable of being elevated above the mechanical routine of his work and deprives life as a whole of any spiritual meaning. Each man is now able to sink into a narrow

rut of his own in religion and morality as well as in daily work. Such is the gain of subjectivism.

True and False Culture

From considering this aspect of life we pass by a natural transition to the *problem of culture*. For it is precisely the absence of a central standard of values which is the prime cause of culture having come to signify a mere polishing of the mind, a more or less superficial acquaintance with what is interesting and piquant in the art, music and literature of the day. Culture has sunk to mean a mere embroidering of a conventional life which rests all the while on a utilitarian basis. It bears, under present conditions, no actual relationship to the real problems of our civilisation. It performs no indispensable function in our lives.

"We have become insecure with regard to all our ideals, nay, with regard to our own being; we no longer draw upon a common groundwork of convictions, of uniting, directing, elevating forces. In spite of all subjective activity, an inner decline of life is unavoidable if this uncertainty should continue to spread."—*Main Currents*, p. 306.

In this brief quotation we have the key to the failure of our present-day culture. The

lack of a positive standard of values paralyses culture in its vital nerve. Let us consider an example from the literary sphere : a novelist wishes to create a strong tragic effect, and to that end he works out a plot in which a woman of high character and sensitive feelings marries a man who subsequently betrays his country and decamps with another woman ; in this case the author relies upon the sympathy of his readers being aroused on behalf of the suffering wife. But upon what will this sympathy depend ? Obviously upon the conviction that it is a man's bounden duty to be loyal to his country and that his disloyalty would cause him to forfeit the respect of his wife ; and upon the conviction of the sacredness of the marriage bond. These failing, the story would lose its point. No literature dealing with any of the deeper things of life can make a universal appeal in the absence of generally acknowledged convictions ; a man who does not believe in patriotism will not be moved by the account of a national betrayal, and the tragedy of adultery will fall very flat in the minds of readers who are disciples of the " new morality " ! If an author or an artist is to work upon the public there must either exist, or there must be created, an inner unity

of conviction. Where there is no common thought-world there are no points of contact between author and reader, or artist and spectator.

Philosophy Indispensable

It may be predicted with the utmost confidence that the modern world will not experience a genuine literary and artistic revival until it recovers a philosophy of life carrying with it a standard of values. The vital connection which exists between art and philosophy is illustrated by the significant fact that perhaps a majority of the most conspicuous figures in the modern literary world have been, in the first place, religious and moral prophets rather than artists; consider, for example, Carlyle, Ruskin, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Bernard Shaw and G. K. Chesterton.

A Return to an Inner Life Necessary

The question will no doubt be asked: Along what path must we then advance if we are to overcome the difficulties of the present situation?

From the standpoint of Eucken's philosophy there can be no manner of doubt as to the

answer. At a period of doubt and disintegration, when humanity was almost despairing of finding a purpose in life, there came, in the shape of Christianity, a new revelation of spiritual reality, a new valuation of life. Man then discovered within himself profundities the existence of which had previously hardly been suspected. Following upon this re-birth, there was developed a new *syntagma*, giving rise to a new system of morality and a new type of civilisation.

If we are to be led out of our modern difficulties, it will be by a similar awakening of the inner man. In the midst of our manifold external activities we have lost sight of the ultimate significance of life itself. In England our necessary daily activities, our ceaseless pursuit of wealth, our restless pleasure-seeking which fills up every moment of spare time, have robbed us of almost every opportunity for an inner deepening of life. The rush for bread and the rush for amusement absorbs the energy of the population. The average working Englishman has no living contact with any uniting moral and spiritual reality. We know that since the churches ceased to hold the masses and to give them some authoritative guidance, no other teaching body has come

forward to perform their work—even along lines however different—nor has there been any development of inner life such as might tempt us to look upon this task of orientation as having become superfluous.

Norström Quoted

The full danger of this situation has been forcibly and eloquently described by a thinker who has been much under Eucken's influence —the Swedish professor, Vitalis Norström. In his book *Das Tausendjährige Reich* (p. 141), he maintains that the *significance of life*

" is very intimately connected with the *deepening* which life acquires by reason of the consciousness that there exists a real but superhuman unity which operates in life, and that man, more especially in his freedom and in his moral, social and religious feelings and actions, and in general in all that goes to make his rational personality, finds points of contact and connection with this unity. This deepening can take place only through such consciousness."[1]

[1] Cf. " The absence of a uniting principle to fall back upon can no longer be ignored ; only a superior unity can convert life into self-life and thus enable us to make it truly our own. We cannot fail to be conscious of spiritual emptiness in the midst of an overwhelming wealth of impressions, and of uncertainty about life as a whole side by side with so much certainty in details. Under these circumstances, all spiritual life and the whole meaning and value of our existence become subject to doubt. The ground beneath our feet becomes totally insecure.

The Metaphysical Question must be faced

Eucken seeks most urgently to convince us that there can be no solution of the problem of civilisation save through an acceptance and overcoming of the metaphysical difficulty. Civilisation is the affair of man. And what is man ? We cannot arrange his affairs for him until this question has been answered. If we agree with the great Jena philosopher that man is not in reality *himself* until he is a participator in this spiritual unity, we must be driven with him to reject every attempt to ground civilisation upon a naturalistic basis. In placing our hopes in this or that reform, or, in general, in any sort or kind of mere *improvement* of man's natural existence, we shall find ourselves utterly deceived. The human task is to discover a *new life*. And this life can be based only upon a positive re-birth into the spiritual world. With our fulcrum in this independent unity, we are then able to exert a leverage upon the whole world of matter ; we can then attempt, in Professor Boyce Gibson's phrasing, " a reconstitution of the whole in the light of the values of the upper level."

It is imperatively necessary to go back to the foundations of our existence and *fight a battle for the preservation of the human soul."—Main Currents*, pp. 128-9.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIALISM

Social Influences in the Modern World

During the last few generations a host of causes have worked together to render man more and more dependent upon his surroundings and upon the community in which he lives. The study of nature has led him to see himself as no more than a tiny and apparently helpless fragment of an immense whole, which appears to determine every detail of his character and every incident of his life. The development of modern industry, with its intricate network of mutual relationships and its countless ramifications, has inevitably brought with it a new feeling of solidarity, of the dependence of the individual upon the community in general. The studies of modern sociologists have shown in striking fashion how men and women are moulded by social influences, to what an extent they are the outcome of their *milieu*. Within recent times, too, there have come into being great national

systems of education; and these have no doubt powerfully contributed towards the suppression of original and independent types of character. An increased study of the laws of heredity has brought out the dependence of the child upon his forbears. The unprecedented improvement of the means of communication, the invention of railways, steamers, motors, telegraphs, etc., and the enormous development of printing and the transmission of news, has brought men nearer and nearer to one another both physically and mentally, and has tended very powerfully to rub down individuality. The rapid growth in the power of the state during the last half century or so (a growth which has come about through a multitude of reasons, amongst which we may mention the necessity for Governmental intervention in the economic world, the general complexity of modern social life, demanding as it does a guiding centre, and the enormous expansion of armaments) has tended more and more to deprive the individual of his freedom of action. Last, but not least, I may mention the popularisation of philosophical and economic views favouring state control and the socialisation of life, and depreciating the value of the

individual (consider the influence of Spinoza, Hegel, Comte, Marx, and Lassalle), a process which has gone on side by side with a decay of the more definite and personal forms of religion.

As a result of these and other causes the modern world has developed, as we all know, a strong socialistic tendency. This reveals itself, not only in the shape of the socialistic movement itself, properly so-called, but in a general trend towards the construction of society on a social basis, and in this form it has affected all political parties and to some extent permeated the entire community.

Eucken's Treatment of the Problem

It should be understood that the problem is approached by Eucken, in the main, from the philosophical and ethical standpoints—aspects of the matter which, in the popular discussion of socialism, are left far too much in the background. In *Main Currents* (p. 352), Eucken explains that under the social construction of life :—

" The meaning of ethics is sought in achievement for the benefit of the social environment, in altruism ; the training of the individual for the purposes of the community becomes the goal of education ; art

makes social conditions the chief object of its work and aims at serving the widest circles; science endeavours to study man, not as an isolated individual, but 'socio-psychologically,' from the point of view of society as a whole; while pragmatism even makes capacity for advancing the welfare of humanity the standard of truth itself":

and it is with socialism in this broad sense that we shall be more especially concerned.

The Struggle for Liberty

A glance at history would alone suffice to show us that the entire absorption of the individual in society, which this movement signifies when carried to its logical conclusion, cannot be contemplated as a satisfactory end. Many of the greatest battles in the history of the human race—both in a political and in a philosophical sense—have been fought to secure the physical and spiritual independence of the individual. From being no more than one of a herd, an undistinguished unit with little or no inner life, man has slowly, laboriously, and often heroically struggled to secure an independent personality. Without this struggle he would have remained a mere higher animal, a fragment of nature, a helpless link in the great chain of cause and effect, a being without will, purpose or initiative; in

Nietzsche's phrase, "a man of the herd." Possibly the greatest of all the rich gifts bestowed upon humanity by the Christian religion was an altogether new sense of personal worth and responsibility, an incomparably deeper consciousness of the vast possibilities latent in the spirit of the individual man, a new valuation of the human soul: mediæval asceticism, notwithstanding certain exaggerations, emphasised the fact that man has a value in himself, that he is more than a sexual animal, more than a mere unit in a natural society, that he is able with heroic self-denial to maintain an absolutely non-utilitarian ideal of life in the face of all the opposition of the natural level. In modern philosophy, too, we see a further development of the same principle, a further building-up of personal values. Through the effort and sacrifice of innumerable generations, man's inner life has acquired an ever larger and deeper content. There can be no doubt that one of the most difficult problems of our modern civilisation will be the reconciliation of the independence of the individual (not merely in the economic, but in the intellectual, moral and spiritual sense) with the ever-increasing demands of society. One thing is

certain, says Eucken, namely, that it would be an irreparable disaster if the life of the individual, with its spirituality and inner independence, became merged in the deadening utilitarianism of a merely social civilisation.

Modern Social Tendencies and the Restriction of Liberty

Mr. G. K. Chesterton has accurately described much of the social legislation of our time as a continuous process of the restriction of choice. The ordinary citizen's sphere of free personal decision dwindles year by year. First one right vanishes, then another. It is not many years since every man was free to educate his children as he thought right: now they are taken from him and forced through a system of training over which he has no effective control and which is often (as in the case of the secular schools of France in their relation to Catholic parents) directly opposed to his dearest convictions. At present he is still allowed to marry whom he will: but it is a question how long he may expect to retain his liberty even in this region. There can be no doubt that if the man in the street could be shown a complete list of all the opportunities for free action which were

once his and are his no longer, he would be astounded at its length and scope. It would be quite fair to state that nearly all, if not actually all, the legislative reforms which have been made in this country during the past decade or so (by either party—Conservative or Liberal) have involved some curtailment of the liberty of the individual: ("Whether the political system tends towards democracy or aristocracy is of little consequence in this connection.") The same process is seen at work throughout the industrial world. The present-day workman no longer fashions a whole clock, a whole boot, a whole chair, or even a whole pin. He makes, usually with the aid of machinery, some tiny portion of the complete article. Such a man can have no conceivable liberty of action. He can have no possible scope for the expression of his personality in the work of his hands. It will be universally admitted that this reduction of work to a colourless routine must injuriously affect the spiritual life of the worker; nor will it be free of pernicious results to those who buy and use the soulless articles thus turned out.[1]

[1] *Women and liberty.*—I cannot resist the temptation to call attention, at this juncture, to the exceedingly obvious fact (to which large masses of people seem to have rendered themselves

Society cannot produce Spiritual Life

In strict accordance with the basic convictions of activism, Eucken lays stress, in the first place, on the fact that society does not

blind) that at the present time women working at home are almost the only people in the community—or at any rate on its lower levels—who still retain any real personal freedom. A woman, even a poor woman, may follow her own bent in the arrangement of her house, in the training of her children, in the preparation of meals, and in her dealings with tradesmen ; her field for individual action is, speaking relatively, very wide. Her husband, on the other hand, in a large majority of cases, is condemned to a life of monotonous and absolutely impersonal work, whether manual or intellectual. He cannot, under present conditions, have more than a fraction of the opportunity for intelligent activity which falls to the lot of his wife.

G. K. Chesterton quoted.—" The woman does work which is in some small degree creative and individual. She can put the flowers or the furniture in fancy arrangements of her own. I fear the bricklayer cannot put the bricks in fancy arrangements of his own, without disaster to himself and others. If the woman is only putting a patch into a carpet, she can choose the thing with regard to colour. . . . A woman cooking may not always cook artistically ; still she can cook artistically. She can introduce a personal and imperceptible alteration into the composition of a soup. The clerk is not encouraged to introduce a personal and imperceptible alteration into the figures in a ledger."—G. K. Chesterton, *All Things Considered*, p. 103. That women, in the name of freedom and a wider development, should clamorously desire to leave a sphere of work which offers very considerable opportunities for the exercise of personal creative activity, and much real scope for emotional and æsthetic development, in order to become absolutely impersonal cogs in the great machine of modern commercial life is an aberration so extraordinary that it is in itself quite sufficient to convince any thoughtful person of the entirely mistaken character of the modern development of civilisation. It has been suggested by

produce spiritual life. It is the spiritual life which is the formative influence of society. And the creative activity of the *individual* is the fountain-head of this life as it manifests itself within the limits of our present existence. We should never permit ourselves to forget that no organisation of life can itself do anything more than utilise the waters which flow from this original source. If the vigour, independence and originative capacity of the individual be weakened or destroyed, society as a body is undermined. What should we say of persons in charge of a picnic if they concerned themselves solely with a most elaborate system for the best possible preparation and distribution of sandwiches, but at the same time forgot to provide the ham, the mustard, and the bread-and-butter? Yet this is precisely analogous to the conduct of those who would develop the outward organisation of life while overlooking the care for the actual personal inner life itself, in which alone our existence finds its nourishment. This personal life depends upon spiritual values;

a well-known psychologist that the "flight from the home" is due, perhaps, mainly to the drying up of those sources of inward energy which can alone inspire personal service and open up its depths. The non-spiritual type of character will always prefer intellectual to personal work—it is so much easier!

and these cannot be given by any merely social construction of life.[1]

Eucken rejects Utilitarianism

It is, in Eucken's opinion, fatal to make our inner life dependent upon any such utilitarian idea as " the welfare of society," an idea which cannot in itself afford any definite standards and is unable to distinguish clearly between good and evil :—

" In spite of its immense activity and immeasurable diligence this [*i.e.*, the social-utilitarian] type of life is lacking in true vigour and decision, in the courage to say definitely 'Yes' or 'No.' It possesses no true content and meaning." (*Main Currents*, p. 354.)

[1] Cf. Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*, from which I take a short extract (p. 63) :—

" Whoso should think to escape the influence of gravitation by throwing his limbs into some peculiar attitude, would not be more deceived than are those who hope to avoid the weight of their depravity by arranging themselves into this or that form of political organisation. Every jot of the evil must in one way or other be borne—consciously or unconsciously; either in a shape that is recognised, or else under some disguise. No philosopher's stone of a constitution can produce golden conduct from leaden instincts. No apparatus of senators, judges, and police, can compensate for the want of an internal governing sentiment. No legislative manipulation can eke out an insufficient morality into a sufficient one. No administrative sleight of hand can save us from ourselves." From another standpoint, Nietzsche, too, satirised the dream of a state-controlled paradise.

What is "Social Welfare"?

In the midst of all the deluge of talk which is now poured out about the "welfare of society," it is rare to hear any serious discussion of what, precisely, is meant by the term "welfare." It is, however, almost beyond doubt that there is a prevailing tendency to conceive of this welfare as being secured by an ever-increasing gratification of man's natural desires. It is argued that because certain sections of the community have certain needs, that if these needs are gratified there will result an increase in the sum total of human happiness; thus the natural man craves for ease and comfort, and it is assumed that as his circumstances are made more and more comfortable he will become happier and happier, an assumption which it would be hard to justify from an actual observation of life.

The Gospel of Comfort

Of recent years an ever-increasing body of people has turned away from all positive religion and from every metaphysical view of life, and has fallen back upon a *negative idea*, an idea which has come to be, perhaps, the

dominating conception of present-day life—the *elimination of suffering*. In every direction we see this principle at work; in the economic world there is a continual agitation to raise wages and to lighten work (and far be it from me to imply that this, in itself, is not necessary); in the scientific sphere men wage a successful warfare against disease, and operations are now performed with ease which would formerly have been impossible; in the schoolroom and the nursery we are to have an easy-going, self-indulgent comfort in place of the old discipline and hardening, while interest is to replace hard work; in the homes of the people the popularisation of scientific Malthusianism is to make it easy for men and women to secure pleasure while avoiding suffering and responsibility. Yet in spite of all this systematic elimination of suffering, the age is oppressed with a discontent more profound than we can trace in almost any preceding epoch. Like all negative ideals, the ideal of the removal of suffering has in itself no positive value. Important as it may be to eliminate pain and hardship, this will not of itself enrichen or deepen life. The well-to-do artisans who have secured short hours and high wages have not for this reason found a

satisfying meaning in human existence; men do not experience a renewal of spiritual life because their appendices have been cut out; the petted children of to-day, who never hear a harsh word, strike nearly all of us as being very perceptibly less happy than the little ones of the days of severe discipline; and who could pretend to believe that the unsuffering childless wives who are so common in modern England really extract from their existence a deeper meaning than do their sisters who follow a more difficult way of life? In the face of this whole tendency we shall do well to stamp upon our minds the saying of Eucken's: "Not suffering, but spiritual destitution is man's worst enemy."

Comfort gives Life no Meaning

It may well be that we shall make immense strides in the overcoming of disease, pain and poverty, and that existence will become increasingly smooth and easy. Yet, at the same time, the general level of life, in a moral and spiritual sense, may steadily sink. We may escape suffering and effort only to fall victims to the still worse dangers of an endless ennui, an emptiness of soul in the midst of

comfort. Did not Browning, a thinker whose affinities with Eucken are obvious, say: "When pain ends gain ends too"? And did not an even greater Teacher say that "whosoever will save his life shall lose it"? It must be clear to every observant person that life does not acquire the slightest meaning or value merely through the possession of food, shelter and clothing, no matter on how luxurious a scale it may be lived, nor how much taste and thought may be expended upon its decoration and elaboration. However essential it may be to render economic justice to all sections of the community, merely to raise the "standard of life" will not *in itself* make life even worth living. Can we forget that Tolstoy, when a middle-aged man, rich, healthy, successful, immensely talented, in the midst of his family and surrounded by friends, came to a halt and asked himself in despair the eternal question: "What is the meaning of life"? Is it not a matter of common observation that persons in the most comfortable circumstances, freed from all material cares, are among the least happy of mankind; and is it not a fact that personal suicide (as well as racial suicide) is most prevalent amongst those classes which

have the best opportunity of fulfilling their wants?[1]

"The Rehabilitation of the Flesh"

Now, from the whole of the foregoing argument we may draw a simple conclusion, namely, that the principle of the avoidance of suffering and the gratification of desire (which might be described in old-fashioned language as the "way of the natural man") affords absolutely no basis whatever for any sort of enduring construction of life. As Mazzini said, the real danger of modern democracy is that it will end with "the rehabilitation of the flesh."

. . . .

Analysis of Social-Democracy

In *Main Currents* (p. 374, ff.), we are provided with a valuable analysis of socialism

[1] As a commentary upon the modern gospel of comfort, I may quote a passage from *Main Currents*, p. 154: "It is more especially true that it is through struggle alone that our life fathoms its full depth. Resistance alone drives it to put forth its whole strength and compels it to exercise its full originative power." Cf. also the quotations on pp. 30 and 95 of this book. The pursuit of comfort has, of course, only one logical end, namely, the extinction of the race; for without serious discomfort it cannot be continued. (In the more well-to-do sections of New York society about 40 per cent. of the marriages are childless.)

as a definite and separate system of life (as distinct from the mere social tendency with which we have been dealing) in the form in which it is put forward by the Social-Democratic Party. Eucken attributes the great importance to which this system has attained to the fact of its having resulted from the fusion of three movements, each of which was in itself formidable, namely, the democratic movement, the economic movement, and the political movement—the first demands the freedom and expansion of the individual man, the second declares the economic factor to be the basic one in life and deduces moral and spiritual values from a material basis, while the third glorifies the state as the foundation of the whole life of the community. The system as a whole is held together rather by its negative characteristics (in particular its opposition to all metaphysical and spiritual views of life) than by any logical connection between its component parts, which are by no means harmoniously combined, the democratic demand for individual freedom consorting very ill with the belief in the all-powerful authority of the state. Eucken is opposed to each of these movements separately and to their resultant whole. The first he finds to be

false in so far as its democracy is humanistic and utilitarian, though he would be far from opposed to a democracy spiritually interpreted; the second he condemns for deriving the higher from the lower in materialistic fashion; and in the third he perceives a most serious danger to personal and spiritual freedom. Their fusion, he declares, gives us a movement which is utilitarian, materialistic and bureaucratic. It is, moreover, if logically developed, essentially secular and anti-spiritual.

Some Dangers of State Socialism

It may not be out of place at this point to refer to some of the specific injuries which might be inflicted upon human culture as the result of a system of state socialism. The chief danger to be feared is the subjection of the spiritual life and creative genius of the individual to the tyranny of the majority—and, worse still, of a body of experts set in power by the majority. It may be taken for granted that in any thorough-going socialist state the government would undertake, or at any rate strictly control, the entire production of books, magazines, newspapers, pictures, sculpture and all other forms of art which

involve financial transactions—if it did not, successful authors, artists, or publishers would presumably be able to amass wealth and become capitalists! Consequently the type of book produced, the character of newspaper permitted, even the standard of art itself, would become a matter of state control. And how would this state control be exercised? Matters of this kind could not be determined by the people themselves *en masse;* they would therefore be handed over to various bodies of professional experts whose business it would be to decide whether or not the state should publish certain books, purchase certain pictures, or circulate certain newspapers. This would be nothing less than a stupendous tyranny. Owing to the protean nature of constructive socialism it is impossible to form any clear idea of the method by which affairs of this sort would be managed in the socialist state. But for the sake of illustration let us take that particular system under which, so it is suggested, the state should pay fixed salaries to the workers who make up the community—each worker as far as possible choosing the task for which he feels himself best suited. According to this method the state would have to decide, in the first place, who should

or should not be allowed to write books, to paint pictures, or to conduct newspapers. There would spring into being a gigantic civil service with endless entrance examinations. Under these circumstances only such types of literature and art could flourish as were pleasing to the boards of government experts, who would, like all experts, be the exponents of their own pet theories, and the foes of genuine originality and spontaneity. Would it be possible to deal creative activity a more deadly blow? It is state tyranny of this type which Eucken has in mind when he writes:

"We must not overlook the danger of spiritual unproductivity, of the strangulation of the individual, of a uniform and mechanical moulding of life."—*Main Currents*, p. 362.

We are already sufficiently acquainted with the deadening effects of a mechanical, bureaucratic control in the matter of examinations; we know how the whole work of education suffers when subordinated to a system of "results"; and possessing such knowledge, it is not likely that we shall wish to see the system of control by examination expand until it embraces practically every human activity! Mr. W. H. Mallock has pointed out with great force the dangers to the liberty of

the press which would follow upon such a system of state control as that outlined above. How, he asks, could a socialist government afford to subsidise papers which made it their object to attack the government ? Yet if such papers were not circulated, how could there be any public opposition to the ruling powers ? And owing to the unprecedented authority which would now be vested in the governing body, an effective and vigilant opposition would be more essential than it has ever been before in our history.

. . . .

Eucken not an Anti-Democrat

I am well aware that in thus setting forth our philosopher's grounds of objection to socialism and the social construction of life in general, I have exposed him to a very grave misunderstanding which it is now my duty to remove. A hasty reader will perhaps already have jumped to the conclusion that Eucken is an anti-democrat, an enemy of the uplifting of the economic level of the workers, and one blind to the material necessities of our human existence. No conclusion could possibly be further from the truth.

The Justification of Democracy

In spite of all those characteristics which have compelled him to reject this tendency as a whole, as a substitute for a spiritual view of life, Eucken recognises in the social movement one of the most potent forces of modern times; it could not possibly, he says, have attracted so many great and noble men, and exerted so deep an influence, did it not contain a kernel of genuine truth. And this kernel is to be sought in the altogether right and justifiable demand, on the part of the so-called lower-classes, for an increased share in all the manifold treasures of human culture and civilisation, a demand which must come to us with irresistible force when we consider the pitiful inequalities of present-day conditions, and call to mind the millions upon millions of men and women who are absolutely shut out from all participation in the secular and spiritual gains of the modern world. The painfulness of the situation is accentuated to an almost unbearable point by the divorce of wealth from social responsibility, and by the shameless selfishness of a large proportion of the upper-class population. If the reader remembers that at the very moment that he

peruses this page there are, in London alone, many thousands of men, women and children lacking even dry bread, and living, many of them, within a stone's throw of palatial buildings in which sit hundreds of persons who are literally feeding themselves to death with every sort and variety of expensive food, persons who spend their lives in a vain attempt to get rid of a wealth which pours in upon them with an almost overwhelming rapidity, he will realise the absolute impossibility of maintaining the present economic situation—for even in England the patience of the poor has its limits.

The Peril of Poverty

Eucken is a warm friend of all that would uplift the democracy. He is an earnest advocate of the right of the poor to participate in the material and spiritual inheritance of humanity, and of the need for their economic elevation :—

"It remains profoundly sad that, as is usually the case, the one care for the preservation of life so greatly predominates and so overpoweringly absorbs men's thoughts and feelings. Life thus falls under a heavy yoke, which tends to produce inner littleness

and degradation, and to cause a dulling mediocrity inhibiting all fresh and free upward movement."—*Main Currents*, p. 381.

All this, however, does not say that the social tendency as such, and insubordinate to a higher reality, is capable of affording us a proper orientation, and it is precisely against this self-sufficiency of the social view that Eucken raises a protesting voice.

Eucken and Mazzini

The fact that in this protest Eucken has with him one of the greatest of democrats and noblest of men, that great patriot Mazzini, should help to convince us that, notwithstanding his severely critical attitude towards the modern socialistic tendency, the Jena philosopher is a true friend of the people. In the essay called *Faith and the Future*, Mazzini wrote, referring to the democrats of his day :—

" Now we have no definite religious idea, no profound belief in an obligation entailed by a mission, no consciousness of a supreme protecting power. Our actual apostolate is a mere analytical opposition; our weapons are *interests*, and our chief instrument of action is a theory of rights. . . . We make of the *individual* both the means and the aim. We talk of Humanity—a formula essentially

religious — and banish religion from our work. We talk of synthesis, and yet neglect the most powerful and active element of human existence . . ."—

lines which might well have been penned at the present day. And in the same essay he gives eloquent expression to a thought with which our study of Eucken has already made us familiar :—

"Now fraternity does not supply any general social terrestrial aim; it does not even imply the necessity of an aim. It has no essential and inevitable relation with a purpose or intent calculated to harmonise the sum of human faculties and forces. Fraternity is undoubtedly the basis of all society, the first condition of social progress, but it is not progress; it renders it possible—it is an indispensable element of it — but it is not its definition. Fraternity is not inconsistent with the theory of movement in a circle."

Here we have, on the part of one of the greatest of the lovers of the people, that rejection of all mere humanism, that recognition of the need for the positive values and definite life-content which social culture alone cannot give, and that insistence upon a spiritual view of life as the basis of progress, which is so characteristic of the activistic philosophy.

Eucken and the Little Nations

Tangible evidence of Eucken's democratic feeling is to be found in his consistent defence of the little nations against the aggressions of imperialism, a phase of his life-work which is too little known in this country. Stirring appeals have come from his pen on behalf of Finland, and he has long been a warm friend and admirer of the Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish peoples. The name of Eucken is loved and honoured throughout the whole of Finland and Scandinavia.

Note

The Problem of the Secular State

It is in the form of a note to this chapter that I can best refer to a problem of great importance and interest which seems destined to come very prominently to the front in the near future.

Under the influence of the modern social tendency, the state is increasingly taking it upon itself to be the regulator of the whole national life. It exercises (and still more will exercise) functions that are not merely economic, but moral, and even, in a sense, religious. Yet, at the same time, the state is becoming more and more secular, and we are told that the socialist state of the future is to be entirely non-religious. We are faced with the question: Can the state be neutral in religious and moral

questions and at the same time act as the regulator of the whole life of the people? Is it not obvious that such a situation as this must, in the long run, prove impossible?

We in England already see the dark clouds gathering in preparation for the great storm which will soon be raging around this problem. Two of the most difficult questions now before the British public show us, on a comparatively small scale, what sort of opposition will have to be overcome before a solution can be arrived at. I mean the Education Question and the Marriage Question. Here we have two examples of what happens when the state, trying to be non-committal, undertakes to manage matters which closely touch the moral and religious life of the people; matters which, according to their very essence, are absolutely inseparable from ethics and religion.

State Control and Public Anarchy

There are two special reasons why this problem will grow more and more acute. In the first place, so long as the state did not concern itself with matters outside defence, finance and a regulation of the merely external arrangement of life, it could easily maintain neutrality. But it is more and more occupying itself, at the present time, with more intimate affairs that cannot be radically treated without taking up some definite standpoint. Secondly, public opinion is itself becoming increasingly divided on all ethical and religious matters. And with the disappearance of public solidarity in

this sphere, the state will be less and less able to find easy compromises that will satisfy its subjects. It would be easy, for example, to make marriage laws in a country where all the people were Protestants, or where they were all Catholics, or where they were all materialists. But what marriage laws will satisfy a people part Catholic, part Protestant, part materialist, and part fifty other shades of belief?

The Problem of Eugenics

Or to take another question, and one which may soon become very urgent, in what fashion and in accordance with what principles is a neutral state to tackle the problem of eugenics? For this is a matter which cannot be approached without raising the deepest issues and provoking violent cleavages of opinion. Even in the very mild form of the Mental Deficiency Bill the eugenic question has already brought forth a volume of feeling of the most extraordinary intensity. (Cf. also the opposition of the religious bodies in the United States to the revolting practices which certain states have legalised in the name of eugenics.) The moment the state, acting as a secular body, makes even a first attempt to legislate upon this matter, it will inevitably find itself confronted with ethical problems which it will be impossible to solve upon merely utilitarian lines; for, in the absence of a clear, positive ideal of life, how can there be any adequate settlement of such profound questions as that of the ideal type of man towards which we should breed, or that of the precise point at which the state ceases

to have rights over an individual personality? And the utilitarian philosophy which is the only basis of the secular state can never give us such an ideal.

The Dilemma of the Modern State

It would appear that the modern state is about to impale itself upon the horns of a dilemma. The Governments of Western Europe have already taken it upon themselves to act towards their citizens as formative agents and to determine, to a very important extent, along what lines the mental and moral life of the community shall develop; and from this task they cannot now withdraw. And this pedagogical activity on the part of the state demands, if it is to be exercised really effectively, and is not to end in chaos, that the state should occupy some definite ethical and religious position. Yet the state is committed to neutrality! To put the matter in a slightly different light, the state is coming, more and more, to play the part which was formerly played by the Church (the thoroughgoing socialist state would be virtually identical with the Church). At the same time the state wishes to remain non-religious. The men and women of to-day are becoming increasingly subject to a vast, omnipotent organisation, overlooking and controlling their entire existence, from the cradle to the grave, their education, their conditions of employment, their health, their amusements, their mental food, and even their domestic life; and yet this gigantic power is to base itself

solely upon a utilitarian foundation, while rejecting, on principle, every positive, spiritual view of life.

In view of Eucken's eloquent and weighty protest against the soul-destroying influence of utilitarianism, I will leave the reader to judge of the seriousness of the problem to which, in this brief note, I have endeavoured to draw his attention.

CHAPTER X

INDIVIDUALISM

The Modern World lacks a Central Truth

It would be difficult for any thinking man to blind himself to the fact that the spiritual life of to-day (using the phrase in its widest sense) is in a condition of disintegration, due to the lack of any central and uniting truth. Upon this favourable soil there flourishes, with ever-increasing vigour, a luxuriant growth of intellectual and spiritual individualism, which spreads ever wider and wider, and seems to be leading to an anarchy in which each isolated person will have his or her own religion, philosophy and morality, and in which there will be no assured values and no positive truth. The principle of individual freedom is being carried to an extreme which is subversive of all stable civilisation. Personal liberty of thought alone, apart from the recognition of any absolute truth, must finally result in a complete vagueness and lack of definition. It tends, indeed, to destroy all

systematic thought: for thought itself cannot be unified and made universally valid if it be divorced from all objective truth. As Socrates endeavoured to teach, the real function of thought is to be more than individual and subjective; it is to discover what is universal, and if it cannot do that, it is ephemeral.

For many years, definite religion, in any shape or form, has been losing its power over the masses in all the more civilised countries. Speaking of the men of England, the Bishop of Birmingham says: "their religious opinions are in complete chaos"; while Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, referring to the ethical and religious structure around which our civilisation has been built up, writes (in his book *The Condition of England*): "The edifice collapses slowly and in silence. No one can tell, at any definite moment, how far the disintegrating process has gone."

The Rapid Growth of Individualism

Of those who are thus falling away from the traditional ethical and religious beliefs, very few become converted to any clear modern philosophy of life or enter the fold of any new religious community. It is true that some become socialists in the full and almost

religious sense of the term, while some go to swell the ranks of the Theosophists or Christian Scientists; but these form a very small percentage of the body of people we are considering, and there can be no doubt that the great mass merely fall back upon their individual reason and lose all connection not only with religion but with any philosophy of life as a whole—they do not even become materialists, in the sense that they consciously adopt the scientific creed of modern materialism. It would probably not be any exaggeration to say that individualism (whether held consciously or unconsciously) is the *real* (if not the avowed) position of far more than half the people standing outside the churches in England to-day—as well as of no inconsiderable number of those who stand inside. It may even be said that individualism is rampant within the socialist movement itself—in a certain sense socialism is in fact a development of individualism.[1]

[1] *The Socialist as Individualist.*—To state that socialism (in a philosophic and not an economic sense) is itself a development of individualism may seem no more than a foolish paradox; but the statement contains a kernel of undoubted truth. The socialist of to-day is, in perhaps a large majority of cases, a man who is at heart a pure individualist. It is not his intention to submit to any truth higher than his own subjective opinion. He may support the socialist movement from economic motives, or merely because he is "agin' the government"; but his

Looking at the matter from Benjamin Kidd's standpoint, we must consider individualism as *the* symptom of a decadent civilisation; for it represents that "katabolic" process, that breaking-down of the social synthesis, that liberation of the self-interested intellect, which is the antithesis of healthy, constructive growth (the "anabolic" process).

Representing, as he does, the plea for a universally valid philosophy of life, Eucken is naturally to be found in the sharpest possible opposition to this tendency of thought —if indeed we may describe as a tendency of thought that which ultimately involves the disruption of all genuine thought. He calls our attention, in the first place, to the sub-

entire mental and moral attitude is that of the schismatist, the man who would make himself the measure of all things, the autonomous intellectualist. Principal P. T. Forsyth has very truly observed: "Is it not the misfortune of many socialists that they are socialist (as many Christians are humanist) on individual grounds which destroy both socialism and humanism? The socialism has not leavened their intellect or tempered their will. They are still incorrigibly critical, aggressive, unconquered, atomist. They love putting men right more than they love loving them. Their sympathies, indeed, are of the twentieth century, but their mind represents the thin rationalism of the eighteenth century, or the ideal rationalism of the nineteenth—in either case being intellectualist still, individualist still. They are socialist largely because of an individualist reaction against tradition and the order represented by tradition. . . ."—*The Principle of Authority*, pp. 313-14.

jectivity into which the individual must fall when he thus cuts himself loose from any positive *Weltanschauung*. A superficial examination might even find this subjectivity advantageous. It imparts to life fluidity and freedom. On p. 366 of *Main Currents* we read, in a description of the individualistic point of view :—

"Life appears to be dependent upon nothing outside itself, and with this freedom it seems to become finer, more delicate, and more intimate than in any other form. The concept of truth, too, loses its customary difficulty and rigidity. For henceforth only that reckons as true which is experienced by the soul of the individual, and experienced, moreover, in the present. Thus the concept of a single truth gives way to that of innumerable truths. Every man has now his own truth."

There is a casting off of old bonds and customs, a venturing forth into the unknown, a boldness in experiment and a keenness in criticism. The individual demands the "right of self-development" ; the opportunity for an unfettered expansion of his specific nature, without regard to established conventions, or even moral law. It is believed that life will thus become richer and more spontaneous.

Individualism not True Independence

This subjectivity, however, can never provide a proper basis for civilisation. For, as Eucken explains: "The individual of immediate existence—and he alone is in question—is neither independent nor self-contained"; in reality the modern individualist is indulging an illusion of independence. It is true that he may have shaken off the traditional authorities, but he has not in this way attained freedom. The empirical individual is determined on every hand by heredity, environment and education. However much the individualist may assert himself against his environment, he still remains overpoweringly influenced by it; even when he takes pleasure, as is so often the case, in acting and thinking in opposition to his environment, his course is still prescribed from without, he does not manifest any real independence. The man who most prides himself on his intellectual independence is often, in reality, the very person most subject to circumstance, fashion, and the intellectual whim of the moment.

The Disintegrating Effect of Individualism

In thus cutting itself loose from the idea of positive and super-individual truth, this trend

of thought is logically led to utter emptiness. It must deprive life of all clear ideals, of all solidarity, of all normative concepts. It must leave us without any system of values, and without any goal to inspire the work of education. If carried out with true consequence, this tendency would result in the entire dissolution of all human society. A striking example of the disintegrating effect of individualism is afforded by its influence upon language. The breaking down of the traditional systems of values gives rise to a remarkable ambiguity in the use of terms, and this extends even to the commonest words in the language. Countless terms in ordinary daily use are gradually losing their clear significance. Such a phrase as : " He is a wise, dutiful and patriotic citizen," if spoken to twenty different people, would probably convey a different meaning to each of them! To a Theosophist the word " wise " would suggest something utterly different from what it would convey, say, to a Roman Catholic, a Primitive Methodist, or a socialist ; similarly with such terms as " dutiful " and " patriotic." Or consider, as a further example, the statement " the people of Liverpool are more moral than they used to be," which is to-day absolutely meaningless,

because there is no generally accepted concept of morality. It must not be supposed that language has always been thus vague. Not many years ago the English people, as a whole, were sufficiently united in their general view of life, and there was a sufficiently firm standard of values, for such statements as the above to have produced quite a definite impression. Terms like " dutiful " or " moral " could then have been employed without any ambiguity, for there was an almost universal acceptance of an ethical background of conviction, of which such terms were the outward expression. What is very obvious in the case of such outstanding examples as these applies, in reality, to all words which involve any sort of valuation. Language is simply a means by which one person communicates to another an idea which he has formed. If there was no community of ideas, there could be no language. If each individual saw the world in a way quite peculiar to himself, there would be no possibility of communication between one person and another (this is seen in a striking way in the case of colour-blind persons, who use terms in such a way as entirely to mislead others). That there can be communication with regard to the objects of the external

world is due to the fact that they give rise in the human consciousness to a common world of ideas. Human beings are so constructed that the idea formed in A.'s mind when he looks at a sheep is the same as that which arises in B.'s mind when he performs the same operation. It is this community of ideas which allows of human intercourse. And it is no less essential in the world of abstractions, and in connection with terms involving values, than it is in respect of external objects. The very existence of a proper speech depends ultimately upon the presence of a common thought-world, which must be based upon a groundwork of common convictions implying a system of values. But it is precisely this necessary groundwork of general convictions which is being undermined by present-day individualism. In abandoning the idea of a universally valid truth, this tendency destroys the sole basis upon which human culture and civilisation can possibly rest.

The strength of modern individualism lies in its valuable criticism of the existing systems and not in its own constructive power, for it is entirely incapable of imparting to life any content whatever. As we read in *Main Currents* (p. 371): "pure individualism and sub-

jectivism is preserved from unbearable emptiness only by being continually supplemented." Even those who believe themselves to have cast off all reliance upon traditional religion and philosophy usually draw unconsciously upon its thought-world, and are more dependent than they know upon that very world of spiritual life which they have rejected (this is well put in Nietzsche's essay on David Strauss, where it is shown that although Strauss cast away the Christian metaphysic, he still lived in a world saturated with its influences). There is only one thing needed to reduce individualism to an impossibility, and that is that it should develop its own consequences to the full.

Nietzsche and his Significance

In the teaching of Nietzsche, we have a more or less systematic attempt, on the part of a man of profound earnestness and rare genius, to effect a thorough-going rejection of every species of religious and moral authority, and to carry the theory of intellectual and moral individualism to its logical extreme. It is for this reason that he stands out as the most significant figure of the end of the nineteenth century. He alone had the courage and the

insight to draw the *full* conclusions of the modern, autonomous, non-Christian view of life. In the doctrine of the superman we have the crystallised quintessence of the great modern principle of "self-realisation": as Eucken says, Nietzsche's cry was: "Let the individual exalt his own life and make the realisation of this his own supreme end." The Nietzschean philosophy is an exposure of the hideousness and futility of individualism. A seeker after truth, and a man of the most determined intellectual honesty, it remains profoundly tragical that Nietzsche should have so misunderstood Christianity as to travel the path he did. What he did not and could not see was that the very moral and social values which he so scornfully rejected are in reality indispensable to the *individual*, even from the standpoint alone of his self-realisation. It was a grotesque error on his part to suppose that the strong man and the forerunner of the superman is he who turns his back upon pity, sympathy, obedience and brotherhood. Such a man is not superhuman, but subhuman. Christian humility is not, as Nietzsche thought, the weakness of the slave, but rather the gentleness of the giant, the magnanimity of the conqueror.

The Value of Individualism

In pursuance of his usual method, Eucken not only criticises this phenomenon of modern thought, but does full justice to the germ of truth which it contains. He makes it clear that the motive power of this tendency is the craving for spiritual freedom and a fuller development of personality. "The social type of civilisation treats the individual as a mere cog in its great machine"; it uses him for its own purposes, suppresses his individuality, and produces a monotonous, "dead-level" type of life. This is fiercely resented, more especially by persons of powerful personality; and thus we get a reaction in the direction of individualism, a reaction which, although the expression of a justifiable feeling, has unfortunately developed along mistaken lines.

Metaphysics Indispensable

In its rejection of all metaphysics, in its refusal to accept the idea of a universally valid truth, individualism cuts away the ground from under its own feet. Individual life cannot really establish itself, or effectively assert itself over against oppressive social influences, unless it rest upon some more stable

foundation than that afforded by a mere isolated subjectivism ; to find his own true personality and his own deepest strength, the individual must come into contact with a spiritual life higher than his own mentality, he must lay hold of a truth which is imperative and universal.

What is demanded, in order that the individualism of to-day should be overcome, is not least a complete reversal of attitude on the part of the individual. Instead of placing himself and his own immediate reason in the centre of the universe, he must criticise himself, with his limitations and subjectivity, in the light of a superior truth. The modern man is ready enough to employ his critical faculties upon the external world. He criticises tradition, he performs analysis in the scientific world, he is trained to accept nothing that cannot be proved. It only remains that he should learn to criticise himself.

. . . .

F. W. Förster as a Critic of Individualism

Individualism has had no severer and more penetrating critic than F. W. Förster, who, after explaining that this tendency is correct in its basic principle that a truth can have no

value unless it be the inward property of the individual, goes on to say :—

"But the erroneous deduction is made that nothing must be recognised as true except that which is capable of immediate comprehension. In this way the individual as he is, is made the measure of all things. He is delivered up, bound hand and foot, to his own subjectivity and one-sidedness. . . . In my opinion the problem is to be solved along the following lines. It is certain that no mere *outward* subjection to an authoritative truth can have any real value ; we must seek with our whole power to comprehend it *inwardly*, to grasp its deepest content. But, on the other hand, the highest truth cannot be understood in the same facile way as can the vulgar wisdom of the hour. If we were able to grasp it without effort, how could it *elevate* us ? It would then be on our own level, would confirm our own incomplete point of view, and would never lead us to a comprehensive view of the whole. He who wishes, with genuine earnestness, to learn what is religious truth, must begin with a realisation of the fact that this truth will not be an echo of *his* imperfect wisdom. It is much more likely, on the contrary, to be in opposition to all his habits of thought, to dissipate all his cherished illusions, to raze to the ground the house of folly in which he has so long dwelled, to upset the tables of the money-lenders, to reverse the wisdom of the scribes, and to glorify the simplicity of the child ! Yet the man of to-day will try to fathom this sublime truth with his everyday reason. And when

he is not successful (and that immediately) he declares the truth, in the name of his 'intellectual conscience,' to be a fiction. No: those alone can understand and can grow beyond themselves, who have first *thoroughly* realised their own need for higher guidance. *Reverence is the one indispensable condition of liberation.*" (*Autorität und Freiheit*, p. 56.)

. . . .

Socialism and Individualism

The Reconciliation of these two Aspects of Spiritual Life

We thus reach the conclusion that neither the merely social nor the merely individual construction of life is in itself satisfactory. At the same time, as Eucken puts it (*Main Currents*, p. 374), "only the most deplorable obtuseness can attempt a direct compromise between the two, a division of life into the social and the individual." The task which lies before us is to overcome the antithesis by raising the level of life. There must be "a transition from a merely human culture, to an essential and spiritual culture capable of embracing the contrast."

The precise meaning of this elevation of life may not at first be obvious. Eucken's

position in this respect, as in others, demands for its comprehension a clear understanding of the concept of spiritual life. It must be remembered that this life is the basic reality of all being, and that the social and individual systems are but partial expressions of this fundamental reality :—

> " Society and the individual are necessary aspects and modes of appearance of spiritual life ; individuals are essential to its originality, society to its consolidation. Both society and the individual, however, draw their power and truth not from themselves but from the spiritual relationships which surround them."—*Main Currents*, p. 374.

Man is called upon so to deepen and spiritualise his life that he is able to rise above the merely human and utilitarian level upon which the opposition between society and the individual is felt to exist. The acceptance of this solution depends, of course, entirely, upon the recognition of a spiritual truth superior to the contrasts and divisions of the natural plane. On a basis of humanism or naturalism no such solution could be attempted.

The real opposition is not that between socialism and individualism (which are both necessary, and, when rightly placed in a

spiritual view of life as a whole, not incompatible), *but that between spirit and nature.* The difficulty in modern civilisation is that we do not possess a philosophy of life overcoming the antithesis between spirit and nature.

CHAPTER XI

EDUCATION

Introductory

At the centre of Rudolf Eucken's philosophy, as we have seen, lies the firm belief that what man really needs is not so much a new environment or a new intellectual system as a new *life*. No thinker is more thoroughly convinced that there can be no real progress and no true elevation of man save through an inward re-birth. A mere re-arrangement of life, taking the natural man as he is, and building upon that foundation, can never prove adequate. Humanity must endeavour with persistent activity to appropriate the indwelling spiritual life, and to remould civilisation in accordance with the norms of this life.

Eucken's Influence upon Education

It is sufficiently obvious that such a position as Eucken's carries with it important educational consequences ; and in Germany no less

than five works have been published dealing more or less directly with his teaching in its relation to the problems of pedagogy.[1] Speaking very broadly, we may say that the influence of activism operates in two main directions ; in the first place it works towards a construction of educational work upon a positive spiritual basis rather than upon any Rousseau-like theory of " natural development " such as is now so popular, or upon any social-utilitarian groundwork ; and in the second place it adds powerfully to the already growing reaction against intellectualism.

Modern Doubt Injurious to Education

The spirit of uncertainty which permeates the civilised world at the present day makes its influence felt in the home, the school, and the college hardly less than in the churches.

[1] *German references.* — O. Kästner : *Sozialpädagogik u. Neuidealismus* (pub. Roth u. Schuncke) ; O. Braun : *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophie u. das Bildungsproblem* (pub. Eckardt) ; G. Budde : *Versuch einer prinzipiellen Begründung der Pädagogik der höheren Knabenschulen auf Rudolf Eucken's Philosophie* (pub. Beyer u. Söhne) ; P. Oldendorff : *Höhere Schule u. Geisteskultur mit Beziehung auf die Lehrerbildung* (pub. as above) ; and, by the same author and with the same publisher, *Geistesleben : Gedanken zur Umbildung unsere innere Kultur.*

While there is no lack of educational interest and energy, modern culture seems unable to provide any authoritative and positive conception of life in place of the old ideals and beliefs which have so largely passed away. The educational world is thus left in such a condition of doubt that it becomes rather a field for theory and experiment than a sphere in which characters are formed who will be able to exercise a constructive influence upon the development of human culture and civilisation. It is being felt that the problems of education must depend ultimately for their solution upon the wider issues raised by ethics, philosophy, and religion. All the endless talk and discussion at innumerable meetings and conferences cannot deafen us to the common-sense truth that, after all, we cannot bring up our children in the way they should go unless we ourselves know our own position with regard to the great eternal questions. The modern plan of allowing the child to develop freely along his own lines, while the educator refrains as far as possible from shaping his charge's mind, does not in reality evade this central difficulty, however much it may appear to do so ; for it is entirely beyond the power of any parent or teacher to

avoid moulding a child's mind in a thousand unconscious ways, even if all direct moral and religious instruction be scrupulously avoided. Moreover, what is unsaid may be as formative as what is said. A parent who refrains from imparting to a child any definite moral guidance may exercise, precisely through his omissions, an influence as decisive as that of the most dogmatic authority. It can well be maintained, too, that in actuality no child does develop along his " own lines " ; every child is necessarily born into some specific environment and breathes some particular atmosphere, and it is these influences, operating, perhaps, before any conscious instruction commences, which more especially determine the lines along which future development will take place. And who can say to what extent the deepest beliefs of the parents or teachers will be responsible for these subtle yet all-important factors ? There is no doubt that the educational world will come more and more to realise the truth of Eucken's contention that its activities are at the present moment in the utmost danger of proving ineffective, through the absence of a " securely established conviction concerning life as a whole."

Neutral Education

It is true that Eucken has not, as yet, dealt explicitly to any great extent with educational problems, but much may be inferred from the general principles of his philosophy. Of great interest to us, for example, is the question whether, as is now so frequently maintained, education can be put upon a neutral basis, that is a basis free from definite metaphysical conviction. Since the first object of education must be the development of moral character, this is practically equivalent to the question: Is morality independent of metaphysics and religion? Upon the latter point, Eucken leaves us in no doubt as to his position. On p. 389 of *Main Currents* we read:—

"No matter from what side we regard it, morality involves the demand for a new world. It brings with it a reversal of the first appearance of things, and is therefore metaphysical. Hence by having recourse to morality, we do not rid ourselves of metaphysics. If we are really earnest in keeping morality free from all metaphysics, we unavoidably reduce it to a state of lamentable superficiality."

Education demands a Spiritual Basis

It is in the very essence of activism that it should work against all attempts to base

education, and especially moral education, solely upon any utilitarian foundation (training for "good citizenship," "social duty," and so forth), since it involves a protest, on principle, against mere "this-worldliness," against every sort of humanistic civilisation.[1] According to our philosopher, the true meaning of morality is the re-birth of the individual into a new world of real values. There is, therefore, an indissoluble connection between morality and religion.

Education and Naturalism

The pedagogical consequences of Eucken's philosophy are more particularly bound up with his view of *man's nature.* If man be regarded as a purely material being and his soul as a mere product of natural growth, education must direct itself towards the development of natural faculties alone; its highest aim is now the harmonious adjustment of these faculties to the environment and to society in general. Here is no recognition of an inner depth within man's soul, of a struggle between the lower and the higher man. There

[1] The fundamental antithesis between activism and any kind of social-utilitarian education is dealt with at length by O. Kästner (*Sozialpädagogik u. Neuidealismus*).

remains no room for any suggestion of the ancient Christian conflict between spirit and flesh. Here is no truth higher than that revealed by sensuous perception. In my opinion, not the least valuable of the influences of activism, in its contact with the educational world, will be its counteraction of this naturalistic tendency, which exerts at the present time an enormous influence (more in the home perhaps than in the school), and is responsible, in particular, for that cult of personality, in the egoistic and superficial sense of the term, which is the exact opposite of a true realisation of personal values. Many scores of thousands of English parents are to-day disastrously misled in their whole treatment of their offspring by the all too plausible theories of this school. The child, they are told, is to be compared to a bud, and needs but warmth and encouragement in order to unfold the beauties which lie hidden within. Allow him to grow up in freedom, to follow his individual inclination, to pick out the line of least resistance, and his personality will expand and blossom like a rose in a sunny garden. Thus, it is said, will he realise to the full his own inner being. How illimitable is the ignorance of human nature revealed in

such doctrines as these! Those who would lead us along these paths are blind to man's inherent weaknesses, to his miserable instability, to the tragic contrasts concealed within his breast, to the strange commingling in his personality of the divine and the animal. They have no eyes for the all-important distinction between spirit and nature, between the higher and lower stages of reality. In opposition to this weak naturalism Eucken stands for a recognition and overcoming of the traditional antithesis in man of nature and spirit. The problem of education depends in a peculiar degree upon our attitude towards this antithesis, and nothing can be more injurious to the work of character-training than a failure to perceive its existence and essential importance.

True and False Personality

The apostles of the naturalistic tendency have made the fatal mistake of accepting a false concept of personality. They conceive of personal realisation as being an expansion of the individual on the natural level. Closing their eyes to the necessity for self-discipline and to the conflict within the individual between the higher and the lower self, they

entirely fail to produce that permeation of nature by the spirit, that awakening of the inner man, which is the triumph of education. But if we hold, with Eucken, that man is a being living in the world of nature and yet, in his essence, a partaker in a higher spiritual world, the idea of personality, as we have already seen, takes on an entirely different significance. A determined rejection of the values of the natural level and an active struggle to seize the spiritual reality, is the indispensable preliminary to the development of personality. It is the first stage of self-realisation. There must be an elevation above the egoistic position. The highest development of self demands the forgetfulness of self. As Goethe said: *Stirb und werde!* ("Die and develop!"). "We are concerned," writes our philosopher, "not with the development or adornment of the natural self, but with the gaining of a new self."

The Need for a Principle of Selection

In *Life's Basis* Eucken draws our attention to the overwhelming wealth of subjects with which the educator of to-day is confronted. English, French, German, Latin, Greek, mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, geo-

graphy, art, music, handwork (in several forms), gardening, games, military training, and finally moral and religious instruction—all these, and possibly other subjects, are looked upon as practically essential. And how absolutely impossible it is that all these can be adequately taught![1] To make a proper selection and determine what is of primary and what of secondary value, we require some definite central principles by which to guide ourselves. Unfortunately, as Eucken says, "we do not possess enough life of our own of a definite character to be able to test and sort, to clarify and deepen, that which is presented to us."

Authority and Discipline

On p. 359 of *Main Currents* Eucken deals very briefly with one of the chief dangers which at present threatens the development of our young people, namely, the ever-increasing tendency to reject all authority and discipline :—

"'Hard' and 'soft' periods are apt to alternate; to-day 'softness' is undoubtedly predominant and tends to give rise to the idea that the weak are good

[1] Particularly when, as Eucken deplores, our schools are staffed with underpaid and overdriven teachers, and money can be found for any purpose other than that of raising the salaries of the staff!

and the strong bad, and that it is the duty of the latter to give way to the former the moment there is a conflict of interests. Thus there is a widespread modern tendency to take sides with the child against the parent, with the pupil against the teacher, and in general with those in subordination against those in authority, as if all order and all discipline were a mere demonstration of selfishness and brutality."

Nietzsche, it may be mentioned in passing, was driven to his glorification of power and aristocracy largely through his intense disgust with the loss of positive values which he perceived to ensue from this weak "levelling"; and in spite of his many aberrations, his message is of inestimable value as an antidote to the invertebrate humanitarianism with which we are now deluged. This "softness" and this failure to recognise the value of discipline is, of course, closely connected with the individualistic tendency to which we have already drawn attention; it follows, indeed, from the general subjectivism and lack of definite belief which is characteristic of the life of to-day; for the existence of a clear, positive ideal has always carried with it, as a logical corollary, the conviction that the natural man needs a severe discipline and a purification from what is merely individual and subjective. Where personality is not

distinguished from individuality, there can be no realisation of the need for discipline. But those who understand that personality signifies the triumph of the spirit over nature will not be slow to perceive that laxity and indiscipline in home and school provides a soil which is in the highest degree unfavourable to the growth of all genuine personality. In some dim, sub-conscious way children themselves realise this truth, and, as is well known, resent the absence of a firm hand ;[1] somewhere deep down in the centre of the child's being dwells the knowledge that the undisciplined flesh is the deadliest foe of the spirit. The " spoiling " of children, which is one of the greatest and most rapidly growing evils of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, affords a most striking example of the close connection between metaphysics and daily life ; for it is due, at the bottom, to a forgetfulness of man's dual nature.

Self-development

It is one of the calamities of a society impregnated with the doctrines of a shallow

[1] As in the case of a little boy (known to the author) who, after a long spell of naughtiness while on a visit to his grandmother, was well whipped (for the first time in his life), and soon afterwards came to her and said : " You know you mustn't mind having punished me, Granny, because in *my* opinion you ought to have done it long before ! "

individualism to have lost sight of the value of authority and discipline for the *self-development of the individual.* The greatest thinkers of all ages have agreed that it is precisely through a willing obedience to what is outside the limits of the petty ego that the individual begins to transcend himself, to enter into a life larger than the narrow circle of his own natural interests, to learn from the accumulated experiences of humanity, and to win *real* freedom—as distinct from the mere licence of the undisciplined self. We are in danger of forgetting Carlyle's noble words :—

"True is it that, in these days, man can do almost all things, only not obey. True likewise that whoso cannot obey cannot be free, still less bear rule; he that is the inferior of nothing can be the superior of nothing, the equal of nothing." [1]

Professor F. W. Förster of Munich, in his important educational works, has dealt in the most convincing fashion with the whole problem of discipline, and his utterances throw an interesting light on Eucken's view of human

[1] The reader will perhaps be interested to know that, while this work was in the press, Eucken consented to become a Vice-President of the Duty and Discipline Movement (117, Victoria Street, London, S.W.), an organization which seeks to inculcate the ideals of duty and discipline in home and school.

nature and his concept of personality; for example, Förster writes (in *School and Character*) :—

Freedom and Personality

" Human nature contains such remarkable contrasts that the freedom of one part is bound up with the subjection of another. Which part then is to receive freedom ? . . . It is of supreme importance to distinguish, clearly and accurately, between true and false freedom. . . . The root error of many modern tendencies is the confusion of true personal freedom with mere individual licence, of the higher with the lower self. The disciples of the ' new education ' begin with quite a correct idea —namely, that the compulsory forcing of children into a mould leaves their personality undeveloped, and even injuriously affects it. They do not perceive that the laxity of their own methods is even more dangerous. The true centre of personality of a human being is in his spiritual life, and can be developed only in so far as the spirit is trained to mastery over the whole lower nature. This enthronement of the spirit is not to be obtained without severe struggle ; a true personality develops precisely by the control of mere individual desires. The more the lower self is granted freedom, the more hopeless does the development of personality become. . . . It is a revelation of the most deplorable superficiality to suppose that the elimination of obedience and restraint sets the individual free for higher development."

There is but one sure road to the overcoming of the antithesis between authority and liberty, and that is to labour for the general recognition of the fact that it is through an obedience to a truth and a law higher than himself that the individual realises that very liberty in the name of which he has so mistakenly rejected all authority. In this task a most important aid will be found in Eucken's view of the spiritual life as at once an objective reality and an indwelling power, a compulsion upon the subjective ego and the centre of the true personality.

Intellect and Personality

Goethe once wrote: "Whatever liberates our intelligence, without at the same time giving us self-control, is fatal." This saying, brief as it is, carries with it almost a whole philosophy of education. It is the expression of a truth which is to-day greatly neglected, but to the reconsideration of which Eucken's philosophy should powerfully contribute. Modern education, in only too many cases, gives rise to a type of man whose intellect is not restrained, complemented and balanced by other portions of his nature. In such

cases the intellect attains a kind of false independence ; it works out of harmony with the higher qualities of the soul. The education of to-day, instead of promoting, as it should, individual and social wholeness, simply acts disruptively by turning out large masses of young people whose intellects have been aroused to action, but who have not learned that deeper wisdom expressed by Pascal, when he said that the highest use of the intellect was to discover its own limitations, and who are therefore sufficiently intelligent to be critical of all the moral and spiritual fare which may be offered to them, but not well-balanced enough to understand the profound need of humanity for all that lies above and beyond the mere individual reason. The intellect can do nothing for man unless it subserves the development of spiritual life and personality ; and Eucken will have performed a notable service to the cause of true education if he, in some measure, compels a realisation of the sadly neglected fact that (as he himself says) intellectual work does not become really positive and productive until it is associated with a great view of life as a whole, until the mere individual reason has found its right place in the world of spiritual values and is

itself guided and impelled by eternal and super-individual forces.

Modern Education gives no Positive Philosophy of Life

Much of the restlessness, discontent and spiritual uncertainty of the age is traceable to the failure of an educational system divorced from any truly authoritative, positive philosophy to furnish those who have been brought up within it with a valid view of life as a whole, and to ensure that inward, spiritual training which is the absolutely indispensable complement of rational development. The absence of this inward training may, if not remedied, prove disastrous to the entire future of Western civilisation. For it alone renders possible that transference of the centre of gravity of life from the natural to the spiritual plane, which is itself the only real purpose of all civilisation.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION [1]

The Need of a Re-birth

THE problem of nature and spirit runs like a thread through the whole of Eucken's thought; and we shall find that the religious problem, too, is best approached from this point of view.

The religious life, if it be truly genuine, is no mere development, refinement, spiritualisation, expansion or decoration of the natural life. We have already seen how decisively Eucken rejects all those philosophies, such as naturalism, humanism, pragmatism, syste-

[1] This chapter does not profess to give anything more than the merest sketch of Eucken's theological position. The reader who wishes to pursue the subject is referred to the following literature:—

Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life, by Professor Boyce Gibson; *An Interpretation of Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy*, by Dr. Tudor Jones (a work concerned almost solely with the religious aspect of Activism); *Eucken and Bergson: Their Significance for Christian Thought*, by Mrs. E. Herman; *The Hibbert Journal* for April, 1912 (*The Religious Philosophy of Rudolf Eucken*, by Baron v. Hügel); *The Quest* for April, 1913 (*Rudolf Eucken and the Mystics*, by the author of this study).

matic socialism, and intellectualism, which tend merely to gratify or develop man as he is, without changing the root of his nature, philosophies which do not recognise a *negative* movement, a break with the first appearance of life. From the standpoint of activism, religion involves a conversion from the realm of sense to the spiritual world: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

World-denial and World-renewal

Professor Boyce Gibson has put the matter very clearly in his book, *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life*, p. 86:—

"Our life does not move on a single surface, but on two different levels at once, the levels of nature and of spirit. The reality of the natural level cannot be contested. The world as given to us cannot be taken away by the ascendancy of the spiritual. However sublimated our being may become, we remain, as men and women, vitally involved in a natural system. But this natural system is capable of radical improvement. To seek to better it in the sole light of natural ideals is simply to rivet more securely the fetters which bind us to it. What is primarily needed is not an improvement of its defects and discomforts, but

a reconstitution of the whole in the light of the values of the upper level."

The task with which we are faced is fundamentally very simple, in spite of the enormous difficulties with which its practical realisation is fraught. In the first place, the human soul must be quickened to the point of a realisation of, and participation in, the superior world of spiritual reality which is the source of our being, and, in the second place, the soul must react upon the natural world, performing upon it a work of reconstitution, elevation, revivification. There must be a world-denial and a world-renewal. If there be no rejection of the world man will remain absorbed in an almost unconscious, sensuous routine; and if there be no return to the world his life will be divided into a sterile and unpractical spirituality and an uninspired natural existence. Such is the problem with which man is, in actuality, confronted. This is the problem which has been with him throughout the whole of history; the Greek philosophers, the Stoics, the Neo-Platonists, Christianity, the modern idealists—all have been primarily concerned with its solution. It is the most fundamental difficulty of human life. It lies at the root of psychology, metaphysics, education, ethics

and religion. In man's own nature, in the peculiarity of his dual composition, lies the secret of this centrality.

Christianity Essential

The previous sections of this study will have left the reader in no doubt as to the essential impossibility of solving this problem along the lines of naturalism, humanism, pragmatism, intellectualism or any allied systems; and it is Eucken's firm conviction that Christianity alone offers us an adequate solution—although it must, at the same time, be stated that his interpretation of the great Western religion differs very widely from those views which have been most influential in the past.

The Superior Depth of Christianity

It is Christianity that offers us the deepest insight into the things of the spirit, and imparts to these the greatest depth and concreteness; it is Christianity that leads man nearest to God:—

> "All the mistakes that have been made ought not to prevent us from recognising that it was in Christianity that the movement towards a self-existent and active spirituality was first carried out on any large scale, and that it was religion, in the ethical

form which it assumes in Christianity, that first led to the recognition of such a Being."—*The Life of the Spirit*, p. 51.

The peculiar force of the Western religion is derived, says Eucken, from the unfathomable personal depths to which it alone holds the key—profundities inaccessible to all merely speculative and intellectual religions: it "transfers the centre of gravity of life from the intellectual and cosmic to what is ethical and personal." The secret of the incomparable personal warmth and intimacy of Christianity is to be sought, and this goes without saying, in the life of its Founder. In this connection a forcible passage from *The Truth of Religion* (p. 360) will throw much light upon Eucken's attitude towards this aspect of religion:—

Eucken on the Life of Christ

"Here we find a human life of the most homely and simple kind, passed in a remote corner of the world, little heeded by his contemporaries, and, after a short blossoming life, cruelly put to death. And yet, this life had an energy of spirit which filled it to the brim; it had a standard which has transformed human existence to its very root; it has made inadequate what hitherto seemed to bring entire happiness; it has set limits to all petty natural culture; it has stamped as frivolity all absorption

in the mere pleasures of life, and has reduced the whole prior circle of man to the mere world of sense. Such a valuation holds us fast and refuses to be weakened by us when all the dogmas and usages of the Church are detected as merely human organisations. That life of Jesus establishes evermore a tribunal over the world; and the majesty of such an effective bar of judgment supersedes all the development of external power."

Christianity, Eucken affirms, signifies for mankind the revelation of a new world of spiritual reality and eternal values; a world, moreover, with which he can enter into the most intimate personal contact:—

"the infinite distance between the perfect Spirit and wholly imperfect man does not prevent an intimate relation and a communication of the fulness of the divine life. Such a communication from being to being gives rise to a new kind of life, a kingdom of love and faith, a transformation of existence into pure inwardness, a new world of spiritual goods."—*The Prob. of H. Life*, p. 135.

Hinduism and Buddhism

It is true that other religions, for example Hinduism and Buddhism, have, in an inferior degree, elevated man and brought him into touch with a spiritual world. But in the case of the Indian religions we cannot but be conscious of an aloofness, a coldness, an abstract

intellectualism, an atmosphere of impersonality, and a repulsive indifference to the wants and sufferings of humanity, which, in spite of all that is noble and sublime in this type of belief, compels us to realise the unmistakably warmer, richer and more fruitful character of Christian spirituality; it would be impossible that the tendency of thought which inspired such verses as the following (*Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, Bk. XII.) could ever come to exert upon humanity an influence even approaching that of the great Christian teachers :—

"... Who troubleth not his kind,
And is not troubled by them; clear of wrath,
Living too high for gladness, grief, or fear,
That man I love! Who, dwelling quiet-eyed,
Stainless, serene, well-balanced, unperplexed,
Working with Me, yet from all works detached,
That man I love! Who fixed in faith on Me,
Dotes upon none, scorns none; rejoices not,
And grieves not, letting good or evil hap
Light when it will, and when it will depart,
That man I love! ..."

In its real essence, and when uninfluenced by Western tendencies, Indian thought stands for a spirituality which would *escape* from life. The highest good is here the avoidance of

suffering.[1] In an inward and psychological sense, Buddhism represents the exact antithesis of Christianity. Here is no enrichment of life, no revelation of a raised significance in human existence, a significance which may repay suffering, but rather, as Evelyn Underhill says, an attempt " towards the extinction of all that bears the character of life " (*The Mystic Way*, p. 26). It is precisely where the Eastern religions fail that Christianity has most triumphantly succeeded.

The Redemptive Power of Christianity

The Western religion not only develops the richest spiritual life, but it brings this life to bear upon the realm of nature with a vivifying, redemptive and reconstructive power :—

" Finite existence is not degraded by it to an unreal appearance, but rather immeasurably exalted in significance, inasmuch as it teaches that the eternal enters into the temporal and there reveals its innermost depths, inasmuch as it holds that a union of the divine and the human begins even in this world." —*The Prob. of H. Life*, p. 133.

[1] In this connection it is interesting to note that modern European civilisation, in its increasing attachment to this negative principle (see p. 130), is pursuing a path which is essentially Buddhistic rather than Christian ; the prevailing modern ideal of life is not the creation of positive values, but the elimination of suffering.

Eucken's Trend towards the Personal

A very considerable part in determining Eucken's attitude towards religion is played by his personalism, ethicism and anti-intellectualism. In his treatment of Christianity he lays stress upon its active and personal side, even to the neglect, as many will feel, of its more mystical, contemplative and intellectual aspects. This reaction against the impersonal, abstract and bloodless type of religion which has too long been offered to the public, is, however, very warmly to be welcomed, whatever may be its limitations; and in his systematic and scientific argument for a recognition of the world-creating and world-embracing spiritual energy as an *independent, self-active, purposive, personal life* (and not as a mere physical force), Eucken has gone far to make positive religion a real possibility to men and women reared in the atmosphere of the modern world.

The Problem of Personality

Our philosopher believes, in the first place, that human personality itself cannot be explained as a summation of separate quantities derived from the natural plane. Man,

as a personal being, is not built up from totally impersonal matter. The idea that he can be so built up involves assumptions of the most extraordinary and preposterous description; it is as if one believed that if first one billiard ball and then another, and another, and another, and another, were laid down upon the table, at a certain point, when a sufficient number of balls were present, they would combine together, acquire life and movement, and begin to play a game of billiards among themselves! The mere juxtaposition of physical and chemical quantities in the shape of the human body could never of itself give rise to quantities in another category, to all those marvellous attributes which are manifested in human personality. But there exists within the life-process a central activity, an "immanent unity," a unity not parallel with the separate manifestations of life, but within them. And it is in so far as man is able to grasp this indwelling spiritual life that he becomes a personality. The realisation of personality is not accomplished without effort and self-activity, involving an elevation of the individual above the level of sense to that of spiritual reality. This spiritual life, this immanent unity, works through

the whole, and it is only through contact with the fundamental unity that separate individuals are able to realise their own being. But there is no unity without personality; and neither the universe nor our own lives would have any meaning apart from a universal personal being. True personality is neither a development of individuality nor a dissipation of the individual through absorption in a cosmic being. There is a contact of being with being. There is an outgoing of the spirit into nature, that nature may itself become spiritualised and personalised—a process which does not take place without an overcoming of the inertia and resistance of the natural level through self-activity on the part of the individual.

The Body of Christianity to be distinguished from its Clothing

But let us draw a little nearer to the question of Eucken's attitude towards Christianity. It is necessary, he tells us, to distinguish between the *substance* of Christianity and its *existential form;* the former is timeless, but the latter alters from age to age. The value of religion to us will depend upon our ability to penetrate to the eternal core which lies behind the

temporal wrapping. But there are two great dangers to be guarded against; on the one hand, in stripping off the wrapping, we may tear away something of the core; and, on the other, in our anxiety to preserve the eternal element, we may smother it in externals. In our consideration of this problem, he urges, we must always bear in mind that religion is rooted in life and not in intellectual belief. The eternal truth is attained and retained not by any act of the intellect, but through its translation into life. If we are to understand Christianity, what happened in Jesus must happen to some degree in ourselves. There must be a transforming spiritual experience.

The Present State of the Churches Unsatisfactory

Eucken is of opinion that the churches, as a whole, do not present a view of life which is compatible with the legitimate demands of the age; and he regards the prevailing ecclesiastical types of Christianity in the light of existential forms, which, while containing a nucleus of imperishable reality, are not adapted to the present stage of human development. He believes that the supreme task of the age is a positive reconstruction of religion, a new setting of Christianity which

shall avoid both the dangers indicated in the foregoing paragraph. Eucken would himself influence Christian thought in such wise that, while holding fast to the idea of transcendence, it should express itself more than has hitherto been the case in the direction of self-activity and a vital permeation of our entire civilisation. Christianity should provide the modern world with a comprehensive unity. We must be on our guard that it does not sink to the level of rationalism or humanism. In the face of all the materialism of the day, it must never cease to remind men that spirit is primary and matter secondary. The churches must make a firm stand against the brutalising poverty, and no less against the soul-destroying ease and comfort of the age.

Modern Protestant Tendencies criticised

While Catholicism tends to force life into a mould, thereby endangering its spontaneity and originality, Protestantism, we are told, is too often lacking in the authority and confidence without which a church cannot impress the age. On the Protestant side there is a tendency to smooth away the opposition which must exist between a Christian church and an age largely given over to individualism and

materialism; there is an easy-going adaptability and a lack of that ready self-sacrifice which ensues when spiritual claims occupy the undisputed first place.

Eucken's Supreme Service to the Age

It will, I think, be generally acknowledged that the supreme service which Eucken has rendered to the present age consists in his having again made it possible for men and women to accept the reality and supremacy of the spiritual and Divine. To those who have been brought up in the so-called realistic thought of the nineteenth century he brings a complete reversal of values. He has made materialism seem out of date. It must be admitted, however, that his treatment of the problems of religious psychology and Christian theology is by no means so convincing as his defence of the spiritual in its purely philosophical aspect; and religious psychologists and theologians (both orthodox and liberal) have been among Eucken's severest critics.

Eucken's View of the Person of Christ

Starting with the acceptance of Jesus as a real historical personality whose life inspired

the gospel narrative, Eucken explains that, while regarding Him as more than a mere teacher, he cannot accept either the traditional view of the Divinity of Christ, or that view which would establish Him as supreme Lord and Master without ranking Him as more than an exceptionally inspired man. In *Can We still be Christians ?* we read :—

" We therefore no longer see in the figure of Jesus the normative and universally valid type of all human life, but merely an incomparable individuality which cannot be directly imitated. . . . Between man and God there is no intermediate form of being for us, for we cannot sink back into the old cult of heroes. If Jesus, therefore, is not God, if Christ is not the second Person in the Trinity, then He is man ; not a man like any average man among ourselves, but still man. We can honour Him as a leader, a hero, a martyr ; but we cannot directly bind ourselves to Him, or root ourselves in Him. We cannot submit to Him unconditionally. Still less can we make Him the centre of a cult. To do so would be, from our point of view, nothing else than an intolerable deification of a human being."

The re-birth which plays such an important rôle in the activistic philosophy comes to us (as Mrs. Herman writes in *Eucken and Bergson*, p. 111) :—

" diffused throughout the world-historical movement and not focussed in one point within that movement ;

and the individual reaches it through a spiritual immediacy, not through an actual and personal mediation."

Affinities with Traditional Christianity

At the same time, however, Eucken has many striking points of affinity with orthodox Christian teaching: for example, his recognition of the reality of Divine love and justice, his deep realisation of the gravity of sin, his rejection of all unredeemed human culture, and his conviction that true human freedom proceeds from membership of a Divine Kingdom and dependence upon God.

. . . .

Critical Remarks

Even were the necessary competence mine, it would be quite out of the question, merely at the close of a short study such as this, to enter into any adequate criticism of the great Jena thinker's religious position; for this would be a task demanding the widest knowledge and the most careful treatment. The following remarks may, however, serve to suggest lines of thought which will stimulate

the reader to a deeper study of the whole matter.

The Treatment of Psychology Defective

With regard to Eucken's defective treatment of psychology, his critics speak with one voice. All his works breathe a distrust of the psychological method which is greatly to be deplored. There can be no doubt that activism as a philosophy of life—and more especially as a religious philosophy—suffers severely from a lack of psychological deepening, a deficiency which is not, however, inherent in its basic structure, and is therefore capable of being remedied with advantage to the whole. Professor Boyce Gibson, Mrs. Herman, Evelyn Underhill and others have complained of Eucken's comparative neglect, in his religious works, of the *experiential* standpoint, and have pointed out the weaknesses which this neglect has brought in its train. The problems of belief tend to be regarded from the speculative and cosmic aspect, and not from the point of view of the believer himself and his own experience. In this way injustice is done to those religious factors which, while being inaccessible to the speculative philosopher, play a vital part in

the actual soul-life of the individual. It is thus, perhaps, that we may explain the fact that Eucken assigns no place to prayer, meditation or worship.

Difficulties relating to the Concept of the Spiritual Life

An almost equal unanimity of criticism prevails with regard to the question of man's realisation and appropriation of the spiritual life. Granting that this life is a reality, in what manner, precisely, is its realisation to be achieved? We are told that the spiritual life is the normative basis of morality; but in what fashion are these norms to become clear to us and to enter into our life? It is true that Eucken has, to some extent, answered these questions. But the very fact that his readers and critics continue to ask them points to some inadequacy on this side.

The Person of Christ and the Spiritual Life—Objections and Difficulties

Critics of an orthodox tendency have not been slow to suggest that the antithesis between spirit and nature, which plays such a central part in the Jena philosopher's

thought, is not in reality overcome by a view of the spiritual life which leaves to humanity, working apparently through action and intuition, the task of appropriating this life; and that a view of Christ's person and authority, by which He was made the mediator between man and the spiritual world, would have given the concept of the spiritual life the clearness, concreteness and normative force in which it is at present lacking. In their opinion, since, as Eucken himself says, personality is the highest form of spirituality, a philosophy based upon the idea of an independent and absolute spiritual life would gain immeasurably in power and actuality if it recognised the manifestation of this life in a personal form. The spiritual life would then lose its vagueness, and become possessed of a definite vital centre. The gulf between spirit and nature would be bridged. From this point of view it is even asserted that activism would itself become more logical and complete if it were so developed as to include the idea of the God-Man.

Substance and Form in Christianity

Readers of this chapter will, very probably, already have asked themselves the question:

How does Eucken propose to distinguish between the *substance* of Christianity and its *existential form?* There cannot fail to be endless conflict as to what is permanent and essential in the Western religion, and what is temporary and merely accessory. And in view of the central importance of this distinction between substance and form, it is to be regretted that Eucken has not found it possible to answer it in a clearer and more satisfactory fashion.

. . . . .

Activism not an Intellectual System

But such critical considerations (which, moreover, do not injure the basis of activism) must not cause us to belittle the magnitude of the service which Eucken has rendered to the modern world. He has offered the age not a pedantic intellectual system, but a philosophy of life resting upon a broad and deep basis of historical, scientific and philosophical work, a philosophy which would enrich our life with all that modern science and thought can give us, while linking it fast with the great truths whose roots are buried deep in the past. Here we find a scheme of reality so well founded and so broadly built as to be capable

of almost indefinite expansion and, if necessary, modification. Activism is no system which claims to press the whole of truth into a mould. Its plasticity is one of its most notable qualities. Rather is it to be compared to a house the general framework of which is sufficiently solid to permit of successive tenants making their own alterations and additions, while the building still retains its original character. And a civilisation like that of to-day, largely disintegrated by individualism and self-centred intellectualism, stands in urgent need of such a dwelling-place. Our philosopher perceives that only through the recognition of an *independent spiritual life* can the chaos of modern opinions be made to give way to a satisfying and comprehensive synthesis of life.

Conclusion : Eucken as a Philosopher of Life

Eucken has not come forward to offer men a fresh set of intellectual opinions. His object is to influence their *lives*. " The intellectual conflict," he says, " is an affair of outposts ; the real conflict is between ways of living." He is deeply convinced that the peoples of to-day, devoting themselves predominantly to the pursuit of material things, intent upon the improvement of their environment, and

intoxicated by the triumphs of technical science, have increasingly lost touch with the central realities without which their lives, however comfortable, can have no meaning or value. In a word, the interests of the modern world are *peripheral* rather than *central*. It is his aim to lead men to a new understanding of the reality and vital significance of the spiritual world. In a world of centrifugal tendencies he would act as a centripetal force. He seeks to stamp upon our minds the fact, so often forgotten, that the whole structure of human life and civilisation rests upon a spiritual basis. The old syntheses of life, satisfactory in their day and generation, have largely lost their hold over the people, and there is a great need for a wider construction. The modern world, says Eucken, will make no genuine progress in the absence of a comprehensive synthesis of reality to serve as the rallying point for the scattered and divided forces of humanity, a synthesis which shall carry with it a positive philosophy of life.

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